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2 June 2000
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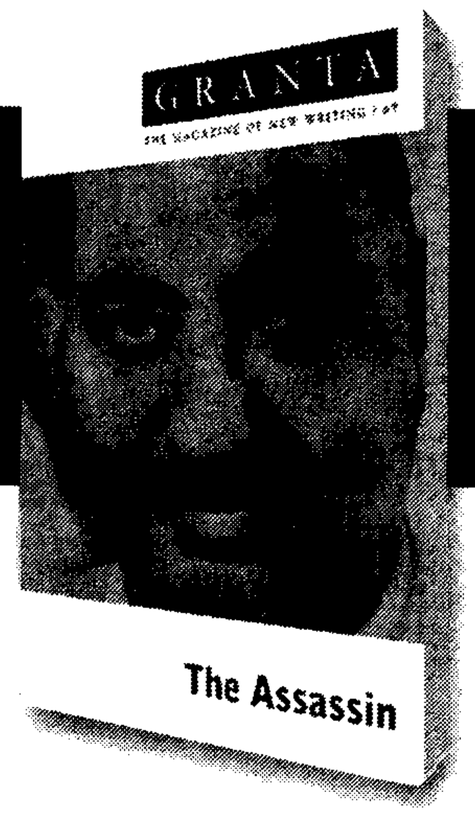
PRIVATE EYE

BROWN DECLARES ARSE WAR



He took out a knife and committed one of the most dramatic political murders in history.

But nobody knows who he is.

The new Granta tells for the first time the strange, compelling story of Demitrios Tsafendas, the man who assassinated Hendrik Verwoerd—the founder of apartheid South Africa. Here's what the Observer said about 'The Assassin' last month:

'In its blend of memoirs, photojournalism, reportage and in its championing of contemporary realist fiction, Granta has its face firmly pressed up against the window, determined to witness the world. This faith in the redeeming power of the writer risks self-indulgence. But more often, as in this issue, the faith is vindicated. The title piece is a moving biography of the half-European, half-African who killed Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid. It is a quietly masterful work of restoration, giving back to the supposedly insane assassin a history of perpetual statelessness and disturbed politicization...Diana Athill, former editor of V. S. Naipaul, contributes an elegant essay on trying to like him, and there are some sharp Hawaiian vignettes by Paul Theroux.'

'The Assassin' also includes new fiction by Hanif Kureishi, Keith Ridgway and Graham Swift ('a poignantly precise story' according to The Times); a heart-breaking photographic essay from Romania by Kent Klich; and a fine investigation into the life of one of jazz's great but forgotten players by Richard Williams.

Like every issue of Granta, 'The Assassin' is a handsome, illustrated paperback worth £8.99. Every issue of Granta features outstanding new fiction, reportage, memoir, history, argument and photography—often collected under a theme. EVERY issue of Granta is special. That's why it's published only four times a year: to keep it that way.

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Today's schools lack a basic understanding of maths.

We are frequently told that education is one of the Government's very highest priorities.

Yet millions of pounds of taxpayers' money, that has been earmarked for education, is being routinely squandered.

That's because the Government has made it almost impossible to finance improvements to schools by any other means than the Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Under this scheme a new school (or renovation of an existing school) is initially financed by the private sector rather than paid for directly out of public funds.

The company then charges the public authority an annual fee over many years to recover all its costs.

It is claimed that this is justified by the greater efficiencies that the private sector brings. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

The cost of private borrowing is always greater. And it is often exactly the same contractors, operating at the same efficiency levels, who carry out the work whether it is publicly or privately financed.

Because private financiers are not interested in small scale, low profit schemes, plans for refurbishing schools have been expanded into full-scale re-building projects.

And precious land, designated for recreation has been handed over for redevelopment in order to 'incentivise' contractors and their financial backers.

Long established guidelines and rules designed to control spending and planning are also waived to satisfy the demands (and increase the profits) of the private sector.

In the final analysis education is paid for by the public. But our money is being spent inefficiently because the Government is committed to an unthinking ideology.

And it is our children who are paying the price.

For more information on PFI or any workplace issue, visit www.unison.org.uk, or to join us call 0800 5 97 97 50.

UNISON

Gnome

I AM pleased to announce the appointment of Fleet Street's first woman editor (for many months), Ms Debbie Dirt. She replaces Mr Phil Filth as Editor of my prestigious Sunday organ, Nudes of the World.

For too long newspapers have been dominated by male editors with their tired agenda of sexual titillation and non-stop sport.

Miss Filth will bring a new, fresh female angle on the jaded world of Sunday journalism.

I wish her every success in her demanding role of carrying out my instructions to the letter.

E. Strobes
pp. Lord Gnome
Nudes International
Wipping EC1

TOMORROW IN YOUR NEW-LOOK NUDES OF THE WORLD

Top Jockey In Love Romp With Sex- Change WPC **3**

Soap Stars Strip For Leukaemia Baby **5**

Sex Secrets Of The Tate Modern **7**

Vicar Pleads "Let me marry choirboy" **8**

Plus sport pix sport pix sport pix! **8-94**

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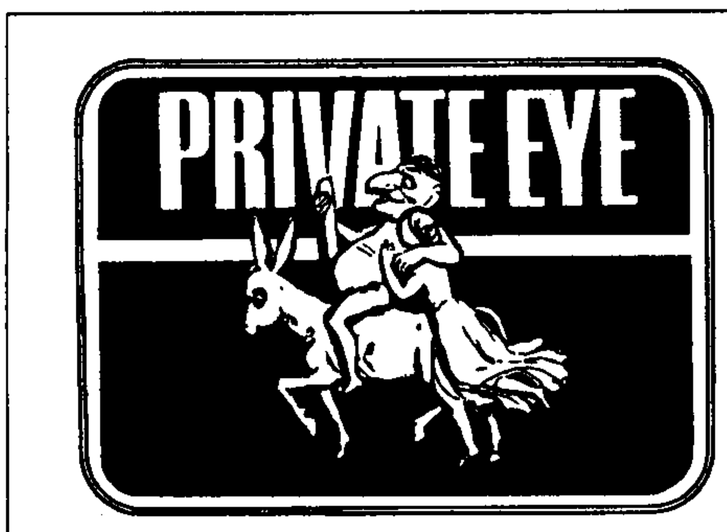
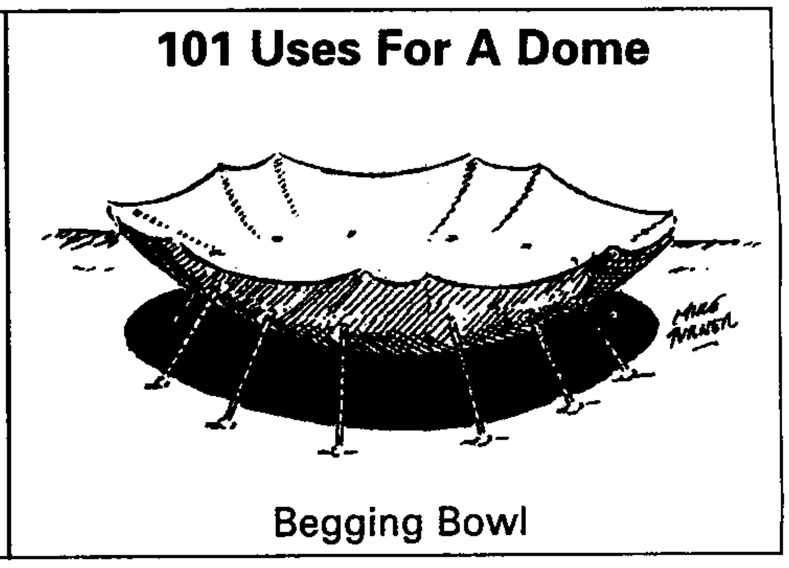




DEMOCRACY and Britain's ethical place in the world are ideals so cherished by Tony Blair's team that sometimes the most extreme steps must be taken to protect them.

On Friday 26 May the London *Evening Standard* ran a letter from Mark Knight, just back from seven months in Sierra Leone, where he had been working on a crown agents scheme sponsored by the British government to demobilise the warring factions.

Dismayed at London's decision to rearm pro-government forces, he wrote: "The most ill-disciplined and criminal of all the factions, in my experience, was the ex-Sierra Leone Army, the same faction which is being rearmed by the government. The decision... [to ignore] nine years of their banditry, rape and abduction of children in the hope that they will not repeat their crimes would be laughable if it were not so tragic for the people of Sierra Leone. The rearmament of the ex-SLA promises to prolong, intensify and complicate the conflict in Sierra Leone."

Such provocative stuff from someone seemingly so well-connected provoked interest from a couple of BBC outlets and elsewhere in the media. But it also caught the eye of Whitehall's spin doctors. Unhappy that such a source should have drawn attention to the gulf between the reality in Sierra Leone and the official, sanitised version, they warned Mr Knight that any further indiscretions and he could forget any more government contracts, before burying the story by ensuring the non-availability of official spokesmen or ministers from the ministry of defence or department for international development.

● *Letter from Freetown, 15*

GORDON BROWN's cynical but ill-informed attack on Oxford via the admissions procedures of Magdalen College Oxford looked even more pathetic when it emerged that he had got one of his minions to ring up College President Anthony Smith before launching into his class war posturing.

The call was made from an airport (such is the jet set world of New Labour) and was meant to smooth over the feelings of Smith who was, up until last week, considered a keen supporter of the Blair project. Smith, ever the diplomat, says that he is sure the call was "kindly meant".

Sadly, however, the "Brownie" who made the call – "You do understand... it's all just politics," etc, etc – failed to check any of the salient facts with Smith and ensured that his boss looked a wally when Smith went on the offensive. Smith, genuinely angry that Brown had destroyed years of work trying to encourage pupils from less privileged backgrounds to apply to Magdalen, is still waiting for an apology from No. 11.

HAVING just been elected to Labour's national executive committee (NEC), actor Tony Robinson immediately threw Millbank party officials into a panic.

Robinson, assiduously promoted by Millbank as a "Blair loyalist", cast aside his chains and turned his fire on "the dinosaurs" in the Labour party who were, he said, responsible for helping to "shoot ourselves in the foot about internal elections". When asked to cite an example to the *Guardian*, Robinson cited the case of Joe Goldberg, who had been prevented by the NEC from standing to be chair of the Labour Students organisation, on the ludicrous grounds that he was, er, no longer a student. Might Robinson's stout defence of Goldberg be in any related to the fact that his daughter is Goldberg's girlfriend?

The decision over who could stand as chair of Labour Student went to the NEC in the first place because a complaint was made regarding the eligibility of one of the candidates.

It was alleged that Brendan Cox, or his electoral team, had falsified membership forms to increase the number of those eligible to vote. The NEC decided no serious fiddle had taken place and approved Cox's candidacy.

The complaint was lodged by the current chair of Labour Student, prevented from standing again because he has not technically been a student over the last year... none other than, er, Joe Goldberg.

● *More Labour pains, 8*

SEVERAL newspapers were delighted to report the views of Richard Middleton, Railtrack's commercial director, on the state of his local rail service.

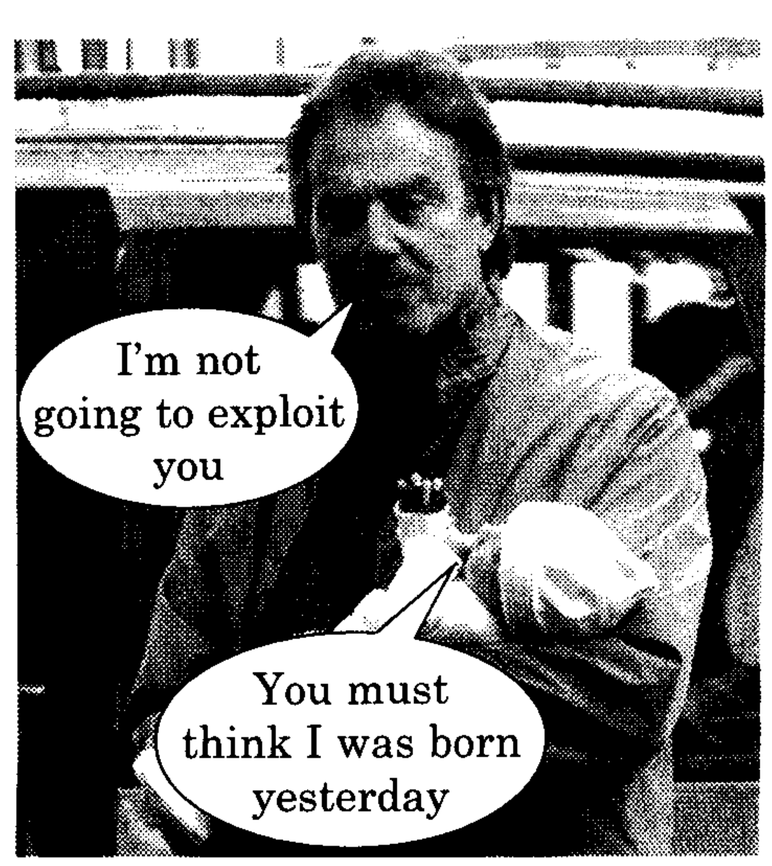
Mr Middleton has reportedly taken to driving to work sometimes because he believes the trains have become unreliable and expensive for passengers. But some in the rail industry were unimpressed with his outburst because:

● Many train delays are attributable to Railtrack, which cut back on infrastructure renewals to satisfy its commercial department (headed by one R. Middleton);

● Train fares are inflated to cover Railtrack's track-access charges, the biggest single cost for train operators;

● Richard Middleton has frequently driven in his Jaguar to his workplace in central London for several years, regardless of the state of his local train service. (Unless, that is, it was someone *else* using his motor and parking it in the underground car park at Railtrack HQ in Euston.)

● *Rail summit leaks: Signal Failures* 10
● *Hackwatch catches the Hurley bird* 7
● *Killer buses, inadequate inquests, college capers... In the Back* 26, 27



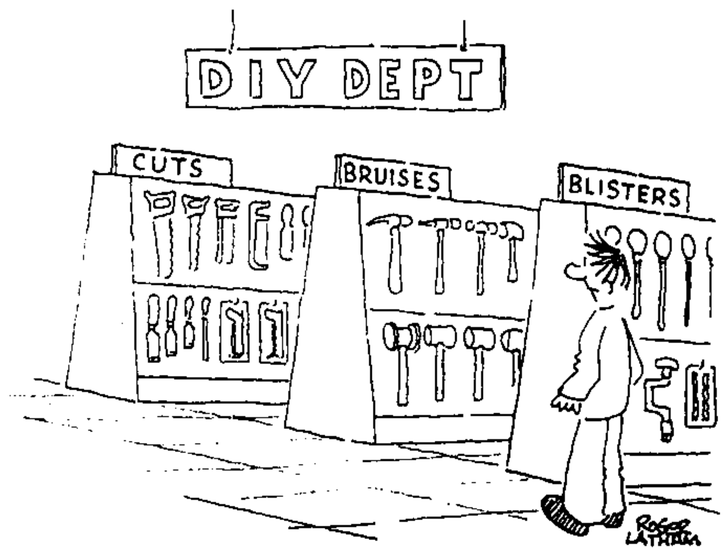
O·B·N

"A new Blair, Chelsea to win the Cup Final, it doesn't get any better than this. This is Britain under New Labour."

TONY BANKS
Century Radio

Nominated by John Groom.

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



NEWS

LORD Williams, the attorney-general, seems hell-bent on using the discredited official secrets act to pursue retired colonel and computer expert Nigel Wylde.

Everyone thought Williams would quietly drop the ridiculous prosecution as he had already done with Wylde's former co-defendent, author Tony Geraghty (see *Eyes passim*). The two had been arrested by Modplod, the ministry of defence police, over a few pages in Geraghty's book, *The Irish War*, which details what everyone in Northern Ireland already knows about computer surveillance.

After criticism on both sides of the Atlantic, the charges against Geraghty were dropped last December. But last week Wylde was formally committed for trial at the Old Bailey under the draconian section 2 of the act.

Williams had better hope for a speedy trial. The official secrets act, and in particular section 2, which reverses the usual "innocent until proven guilty" tenet of our criminal justice system, is likely to be one of the first casualties when the new human rights legislation comes into force in October.

KELDA GROUP, aka Yorkshire Water, is due back in court in July (see *Eye* 985) to argue that discoloured water supplied by the company which was deemed unfit for human consumption by the drinking water inspectorate, was not unhealthy, merely unpalatable.

If the case goes ahead, absent from the dock will be those in charge of the company during the alleged offences in 1997 and 1998. No sooner had chairman Brandon Gough jumped ship to the ill-fated Alchemy (*Eyes passim*), than chief executive Kevin Bond left "by mutual consent". The departure of Yorkshire Water Services MD Jonson Cox means the company's top three directors have left this year.

In April Kelda announced a strategic review of: "The benefits of separation, subject to regulatory approvals, of the ownership and operation of Yorkshire Water Services Ltd". Translated, this means that one company would own the assets, the pipes, pumps, reservoirs and treatment works, while the other would provide operational services, staff, vans and spades.

The advantage to Kelda would be that in future only one of the new companies would come under Ofwat's scrutiny.

WHEN senior police officers started to question the decision by the home office to comply with a non-compulsory European standard on police radios, ministers responded by selling off the old bandwidth so they have no choice but to adopt the new system.

While the government raked in a tidy £22bn from the 3G mobile phone licence auctions, the police are being asked to shell out £2.5bn they can ill afford for the new technology, known as Tetra, according to a report in trade magazine *Network News*.

Tetra, which is being supplied by BT and Motorola, provides a superior voice communication system but, unlike the old network, it is not capable of transmitting essential data such as figures and images of suspects.

By the time Tetra is rolled out by 2005, UMTS, a newer technology providing high speed, high quality transmission of voice and data, will already have arrived on the market, making it outdated before it is even fully in use.

Street Of Shame

EVER since it urged Tony Blair to "DUMP THE DOME" on 17 June 1997, the *Sun* has provided a forum for enlightened debate on the millennium dome.

"That damned Dome has disaster written all over it." (*Sun* editorial, 12 Jan 1998.) "[The Dome] has all the makings of the biggest white elephant of this or any other century... What a terrible monument to the human ego." (*Sun* editorial, 17 February 1999.)

The *Currant Bun* made a U-turn when it appointed Britain's first millennium correspondent, Mandy Millennium, on 24 February 1999 – coincidentally the same day the prime minister announced that Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV would be giving the dome £12m in sponsorship.

The editorial the next day gushed: "The plans for the Millennium Experience are dazzling. If it all comes off, the Prime Minister's prediction will be correct. *The Dome will be a great advert for Britain.*"

Some newspapers might be ashamed to change their mind about the project again after such words of confidence, but not the *Sun*. "If the Millennium Dome was a private business, it would be going bust by now. Instead it props itself up with more public money from the Lottery. What a disgrace." (*Sun* editorial, 23 May.) "When will someone in Government take the rap for the Dome disaster? There's plenty of candidates for criticism: Half the cabinet for starters." (*Sun* editorial, 24 May.) "When we see another £29 million from the Lottery propping up this crumbling monument to political vanity... we know that the New Establishment elitist clique running Britain has got it completely and utterly wrong." (*Sun* editorial, 30 May.)

DESPITE having millions of words in print, Barbara Cartland's most interesting work was an unpublished tome called *How I Want To Be Remembered.*

This 60-page document between pink boards and tied with a pink ribbon was written by Cartland in 1994 and sent to obituary editors and selected hacks.

After romantic stories of debonair lovers, duels and honourable suicides, it reveals that la Cartland wanted to be remembered for having had four rooms named after her, including the Barbara Cartland Room at Brooklands race track in Weybridge and a room at the Heritage Hotel at Helmsdale in Sutherland, which apparently has a model of her in it, as well as some books and, er, the first fish she ever caught.

Cartland also boasted of having been the first person to get on *This is Your Life* twice and for having founded a gypsy camp named Barbaraville. She wanted it recorded that she also founded the National Association for Health (an alternative medicine set-up) in 1964 and that she answered 40,000 letters a year – 30,000 of them on health matters. Oh, and in 1981 she was voted Achiever of the Year by the National Home Furnishings Association of Colorado Springs.

Alas, most will remember her for the 723 published books no one ever admits to reading.

SO widespread is the fame of the Tory party's leader that he even merited a mention on page four of French newspaper *Le Monde* the other day.

In an article on "The anxieties of the English press", the correspondent reports: "In the *Daily Telegraph*, the Conservative leader Michael Portillo accuses Tony Blair of 'dishonesty' in concealing that the majority of European politicians believe the euro will lead 'to a new country called Europe'."

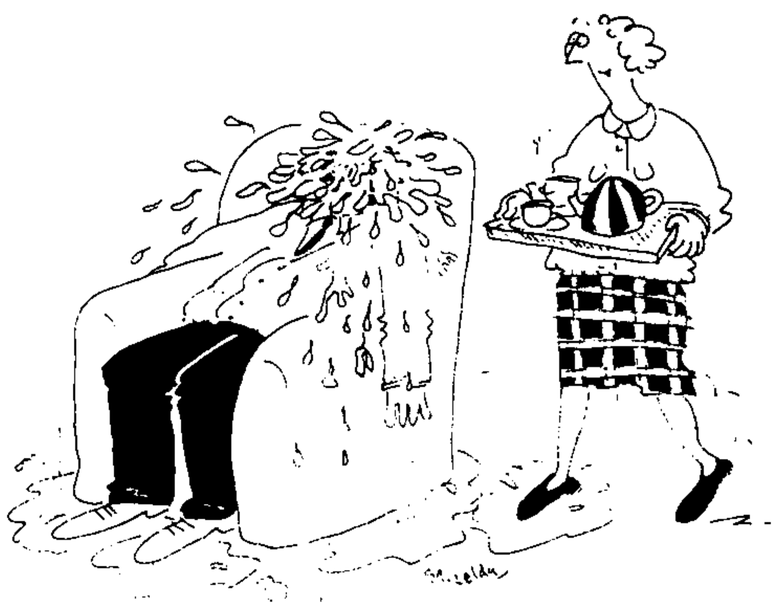
A COMPETITION to find the Street's least popular journalist with his or her peers would be a closely-fought contest. But way out in front is *Sunday Times* Magazine editor and one-time *Sunday Express* editor (failed), Robin Morgan.

When it was announced to *ST* hacks that Morgan had contracted malaria on a trip to Africa, an unsympathetic cheer rang around the paper's Wapping office.

WHILE the octogenarian Bill Deedes continues to write thousands of words for the *Daily Telegraph* from all corners of the globe, his son Jeremy – the paper's managing director – appears to be rather under-employed.

This, at least, is the popular explanation for a bizarre, Heathco-style questionnaire, which clearly took many hours to compile, that he has sent out to all staff. Hacks are invited to fill in a lengthy series of multiple-choice questions giving their views on the all-important topic of, er, departmental notice-boards. Are the notices changed too often, or not often enough? Are they "interesting" and "entertaining"? Do they "give me news I don't get from any other source"? Should they include "more celebration"?

Having exhausted every aspect of notice-board policy, Deedes concludes the survey with a section on "branding". Hacks are asked to choose five of the following words which best sum up the *Telegraph* brand: "honest, feminine, informative, old, innovative, conservative, old-fashioned, metropolitan, young, entertaining, right-wing, stuffy, rural, gossipy, popular, masculine, witty, quality, establishment, intelligent."



"Oh dear... high pollen count, darling?"

OLDER readers will recall Kelvin Mackenzie's technique for dealing with *Sun* subscribers who rang up with complaints: he told them they were "banned" from ever buying the newspaper again. Has the liberal, civilised *London Review of Books* adopted a similar policy?

After noticing an advert for it in the *Guardian*, Dr Charles Landon took out a year-long subscription to the *LRB* last December. Two months later, on 17 February, the magazine published a letter from him taking issue with Elizabeth Lowry's review of a South African novel. His main point was that the divisions in South Africa cannot entirely be blamed on Afrikaners, who merely extended and made official a system of apartheid which had already existed de facto under the British.

A rebuttal from Lowry was printed on 2 March, whereupon Landon sent in a further letter on the subject – which was not published. When he wrote again, he had an email reply from the magazine accusing him of being "craven". Shortly afterwards, having received the magazine for only four months, Landon found that his subscription had been mysteriously cancelled.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"Glamorous skyscrapers... Canary Wharf is our best effort so far, but things are looking up in the capital. There is talk of new towers sprouting and a promise that we will be taken to new heights, seduced by verticality and views, the excitement of daring engineering... Sir Norman Foster is already on site with Britain's second-tallest building, alongside the main tower at Canary Wharf. The 233-metre structure will be home to the bank HSBC International."

— Feature in London *Evening Standard*, 24 May

"The Health & Safety Executive confirmed today it is investigating a crane accident at Canary Wharf 10 days before another incident that killed three people... The crawler crane apparently crashed to the ground on the Blackwall Place building site, next to the HSBC site where three workers died on Sunday."

— News story in London *Evening Standard*, 24 May

HACKWATCH

The Daily Hurleygraph

THE front page of last Wednesday's *Guardian* led on the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. But the *Daily Telegraph* had far more important news: its front page was dominated by a huge photo of Liz Hurley, accompanied by a report on her "trial separation" from Hugh Grant. A further lengthy article on the subject filled much of page 3.

And one can see why. For the *Daily Hurleygraph*, this could be the end of an era that began six long years ago...

1994: In May, Liz Hurley wears a safety-pinned Versace dress to the premiere of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. Over the next seven months the *Telegraph* publishes no fewer than 30 stories about Liz. We learn that she always uses Chanel No 5 scent; that she has worn a white dress to another film premiere; that she has been robbed of £10 by a gang of four teenage girls. "I hope," top pundit Frank Johnson opines, "that Miss Hurley will remain above politics."

1995: During the year, the *Hurleygraph* carries 85 stories about its heroine – an average of more than seven every month. She is, the paper reports, thinking of becoming a Roman Catholic; she attends a party at the British ambassador's residence in Washington with top Clinton aides; Newt Gingrich declines an invitation to be photographed with her for the cover of *Newsweek*.

1996: The annual tally of Hurley stories in the *Telegraph* dwindles slightly, to 75. We learn that she supports Fulham FC; that she often spends evenings playing "an intriguing new game", a quiz based entirely on the early novels of Jilly Cooper; that she is one of the "luminaries" supporting the Passports for Pets campaign; that her old double bed is to be auctioned by Messrs Gardiner-Houlgate of Bath; and that she's "a star new entry" in this year's *International Who's Who*.

1997: Only 61 Hurley stories this year – little more than one a week. Is she on the slide? "The photograph of Elizabeth Hurley that appeared in practically every British newspaper on Tuesday was enough to bring tears to the eyes," top pundit Alexander Chancellor writes on 20 February. "The glamour puss didn't merely look ludicrous in her clumsy, see-through outfit with bikini top and big black knickers. She looked ugly. This is a horrible thing to say, but it's true... What can be the matter?"

But Liz rallies gamely. In subsequent months we learn that she has appointed the German decorator Monika Apponyi to refurbish her new house on "the fashionable Fulham-Chelsea borders", and that her literary tastes "err towards Catholic angst, Greene, Waugh and the like". The *Telegraph* also gives great prominence to the news that the Getty Museum in Los Angeles has bought a Poussin landscape from Henry Dent-Brocklehurst of Sudeley Castle, explaining that "Mr Dent-Brocklehurst [is] a close friend of the actress Elizabeth Hurley".

1998: A mere 60 stories about Hurley in the *Telegraph*. But never mind the quantity, feel the quality. She appears sprayed from head to toe in gold paint to promote a range of make-up. Hugh Grant reveals that "there was an exciting phase she went through of wearing a school uniform all the time". Meanwhile, Hurley welcomes the government's proposals to scrap British quarantine rules. "I am delighted," she tells the paper. "Unfortunately I still can't get a dog because I spend a lot of time in the US, which is still considered a rabid zone."

At the Olympia Antiques Show, she buys a 16th century Spanish crucifix; and, a spokesman adds, "she was very interested in some other iconography". At Henry Dent-Brocklehurst's wedding to model Lili Maltese in May, she steals the limelight by flashing her underwear. The debate on "those knickers" dominates the *Telegraph*'s columns for several weeks afterwards.

1999: A vintage year: the *Telegraph* carries 75 stories about Hurley. After the premiere of *Notting Hill*, at which she wears a backless and largely topless sequinned Versace dress, "split to well above the panty line", top pundits Boris Johnson, Frank Johnson and Alexander Chancellor all write columns discussing whether she outshone Julia Roberts. Boris thinks that Roberts's armpit-hair won the day; Frank and Alexander back Hurley.

A few weeks later there are further learned disquisitions on the shocking-pink dress and "socking great diamond pendant by Graff" which she wears to Donatella Versace's party in London. Then comes the launch party for *Talk* magazine, at which the *Telegraph*'s New York correspondent observes her "straining at the seams of a tight, backless, white dress".

A week later Liz attends a London film premiere wearing a see-through gold chain mail dress adorned with hundreds of tiny mirrors, sequins and diamantes. "I wear jeans 365 days a year," she informs the *Daily Hurleygraph*, "and it's quite nice to get out of them occasionally." Soon afterwards she is named as godmother to Lennon Gallagher, baby son of Liam and Patsy. "I was really proud to be asked," she reveals exclusively in the *Telegraph*, "and I hope I'll do the job well."

Meanwhile the BBC confirms that Hurley has been invited to appear on *Question Time*, but denies that this represents dumbing-down. "There is no question of changing the remit of the programme for serious-minded discussion of topical issues," a BBC spokesman assures the paper.

2000: The year begins with the news that Hurley "is planning a move into journalism for one very special assignment" – an interview with "Gazza" Gascoigne for *GQ* magazine. Then the *Telegraph* reports that she has been "shopping at the Hustler sex gadget supermarket on Sunset Boulevard". Soon afterwards she is "spotted in Hollywood wearing a T-shirt bearing the legend 'Porn Star in Training'."

On 9 May, when Hurley is photographed on holiday sucking on a baby's dummy in an attempt to give up smoking, a lengthy *Telegraph* feature wonders if this could be the start of a new trend. Worryingly, however, between January and May there are only 29 stories about Hurley in the *Telegraph*. Happily, in the nick of time, she announces her trial separation from Hugh Grant, thus propelling herself straight back on to the front page.

The paper's in-depth coverage hails the couple as the Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor of their day. "But," a lone dissenting reader points out in a letter to the editor on 25 May, "Burton and Taylor could both act."

NOOKS and CORNERS

SINCE SAVE Britain's Heritage was founded 25 years ago it has done a huge amount to highlight beautiful, and potentially useful, historic buildings in danger.

1975 was European Architectural Heritage Year and, in the first of many reports, the new pressure group pointed out that in the first six months of that year, under Harold Wilson's shabby Old Labour government, 182 listed buildings had already been demolished and many more were threatened.

A quarter of a century later, under Tony Blair's whizzy "new" Labour government, has anything really changed? Well, yes, much has. Very much thanks to SAVE, the climate has changed and it is now widely recognised that not only country houses and churches but redundant hospitals, mill buildings and other structures can and should find a beneficial new use.

It was SAVE that persuaded Michael Heseltine to restart the listing process in 1980 and to establish the presumption that every avenue for reusing a listed building should be explored before demolition is permitted. Even so, many architects and local authorities are as delinquent as ever — modish architects complain that conservation has gone too far while there are local authorities, like Bradford (*Eye* 1002), who still could not give a damn.

SAVE points out that English Heritage's Building at Risk strategy to persuade councils to use their powers to save threatened buildings "has not fulfilled its potential", and it further argues that the power English Heritage has in London to serve urgent works and repairs notices should be extended to the whole country. Meanwhile EH's central government grant has fallen by 10 percent in real terms over the last seven years.

SAVE has now produced *Grand Ideas for the Nation's Heritage. 25 proposals for the future of conservation put forward to mark SAVE's 25th Anniversary;* and it is an admirable document. Practical and optimistic, it is well worth reading, particularly by government ministers.

What is depressing, though, is that one of its modest, sane proposals was put forward back in 1975 — the abolition of VAT on repairs to historic buildings. All that has happened in the meantime is that the rate has risen from 5 percent to a punitive 17.5 percent *(Eyes passim ad nauseam).* "Reform of VAT remains arguably the single most important policy goal in conservation."

Another proposal is to ensure listed buildings are kept wind and watertight, especially the 10,000 odd empty and decaying listed buildings in Britain which could be restored to beneficial use. "Much poorer countries than Britain — notably the Czech Republic — have instituted programmes to put temporary roofs on buildings."

Another sensible proposal — which ought to appeal to forward-looking architects – is to "Heal the wounds in our urban fabric... with a programme of imaginative infill buildings." This, of course, would have been an admirable way of celebrating the millennium (like Peter Palumbo's proposal to restore every great cathedral). Instead, we have... The Dome.

AH, The Dome. Now, without becoming hysterical, we need to put that extra £29m (on top of the hundreds of millions already wasted) just given by the lottery in perspective. English Heritage's grant budget for its north-west region in 1999 was £100,000 and it received 37 bids for help with repairs to historic buildings with a total cost of more than £3m.

I mention this as one disappointed applicant to both EH and the heritage lottery fund was the architect for the restoration of St Augustine's Church in Pendlebury, Manchester. Yet St Augustine's is one of the finest Victorian churches of them all. Designed by Bodley & Garner and built in the 1870s to serve a mining community, it is a building of rare power and refinement — the product of a period when British architecture really was the admiration of the world.

Now, as the prospects for financial help in 2000 are gloomy, the struggling parish may give up and this great building would then have to be rescued by the Churches Conservation Trust and maintained at taxpayers' expense. Is that an appropriate, or even sensible way to celebrate Christ's 2000th Birthday?

'Piloti'

JUST FANCY THAT!

"The best writers. The sharpest opinions. DEBORAH ROSS meets Ben Elton. NATASHA WALTER on the Blair Baby..."

— Banner across front page of the *Independent*, 22 May

"Newspapers compete for the bylines of supposed star columnists. Yet it is hard to think of a single writer whose presence drives a paper's sales upwards, or whose absence sends readers scurrying off to other titles."

— David Thomas, *Independent*, 22 May

PLUGGED IN

EVEN in the face of disaster the Murdoch press cannot resist a plug.

The report of the explosion at a Dutch fireworks factory in the *News of the Screws* on 14 May was illustrated by... a frame bearing the Sky News logo.

"His vast fortune came from suing his surgeons..."

IN THE TEAROOM

AFTER the champagne, the hangover. By the time Tory MPs get back to Westminster next week, realism will have set in.

The shadow cabinet has been in over-buoyant mood recently. Never has Liam Fox looked so chipper, Francis Maude so relaxed. Ann Widdecombe has had a joyous gleam in her eye and if not quite a spring, then at least a more sprightly shuffle in her step. A hesitant, sardonic twitch has even been seen flitting across the fleshy lips of Michael Portillo. But what have they got to be so jolly pleased with themselves about?

As the central office number crunchers are set to explain, the vaunted Tory revival is no such thing. Even at its crest, Hague's big comeback would most likely only have reduced a projected Labour majority of 200 seats to something closer to 150 at the next election. There was the odd dramatically encouraging poll, for sure; but look at the trend and the detail and it's all bad news. Even those who think William Hague is connecting with the right issues – asylum, law 'n' order, pensions – don't trust him to do anything about them. As Conservative Party fortunes rise, Hague's personal ratings stay mired in the deep negatives.

So why should Tony Blair worry? Labour's big fear is not of swing voters switching back to the Tories so much as of the unpredictable consequences of a mass stay at home by Labour's own. Hence the Oxford-bashing populism. Health secretary Alan Milburn wants to take this further. He's worked himself into a pugilistic froth against the NHS consultants. He wants to name and shame the idle, freeloading leeches and strip away their privileges. At Labour's great strategy-fest last week, wiser colleagues counselled caution. Not only are consultants cleverer than Milburn, they can even out-bastard the health secretary when people try to mess with their perks. What's the point of spending £13bn more on health if every day there's some whingeing medic on the *Today* programme saying it isn't making any difference?

Gordon Brown looks on with a face as black as thunder. But inside he's as merry as anything. The chancellor knows that only he can wrap up the election with a big red ribbon. Only he knows how to speed up the feelgood effect of the new money coming on stream without causing inflation. It's the sort of thing he's good at. But as he looks around the table he sees only pests and irritants – Milburn, whose judgement he distrusts; the weaselly trade secretary Stephen Byers, who's pinning himself to Mandelson's pro-Euro coat-tails; and Mandy himself, flushed with Northern Ireland success.

Brown can and will make it right for "new" Labour, but boy will he exact a heavy political price. At the last reshuffle it was chief of staff Jonathan Powell who sat at Tony's side doling out the plum jobs. This time it's Gordon's party.

'Urquhart'

LEO ABSE, former Labour MP and thorn in the side of the Rev Tony since he wrote his "psychological observation" of the prime minister (*Tony Blair: the Man Behind the Smile*) has been asked by his publisher to revise and update the book for a new edition.

The 83-year-old Abse is delighted, but grumbles that the job couldn't have come at a worse time: he is hard at work finishing his new political book, *Fellatio, Masochism, Politics and Love*. This, er, seminal work, due out in August, discusses how "masochistic influences bear down on decision making" and aims to show "as Clinton demonstrated, that fellatio cannot be treated as a political irrelevance".

Perish the thought. A spokesperson at Abse's publisher, Robson Books, tells the *Eye*: "The revised Blair book won't be out till next year. Leo's much too busy with *Fellatio* at the moment."

WHILE Tony Blair's political adviser Sally Morgan and then Margaret McDonagh were blamed for the great Ken Livingstone stitch-up, the real villains have been allowed to get away scot-free.

So who are the backroom boys who can really claim credit for cobbling together the "electoral college" that was designed to – and succeeded in – blocking Ken Livingstone's selection as official Labour party candidate? Step forward Phil "Woolly-arse" Woolas MP and Jon Cruddas, a Downing Street political fixer. The backroom boys are more than happy for the two front-room girls to get it in the neck.

EXTRAORDINARY attempts are being made to ensure that Jon Cruddas succeeds Judith Church MP as the new Labour candidate for Dagenham in time for the next election.

Just before Christmas officers of the local party were amazed to receive an invitation to tea at 10 Downing Street. Such astonishing largesse had Labour members in adjoining areas rubbing their eyes in disbelief. But no sooner had the officers arrived in Downing Street than it became apparent the charm offensive was inextricably bound-up with the hopes of one Jon Cruddas.

So keen were party officials to dissuade local councillor Cameron Geddes from throwing his hat in the ring for the seat, he was offered "ten minutes" to chat things through "with Tony". Meanwhile the locally powerful engineering union AEEU has just completed its first Cruddas nomination meeting in the borough. Various worthies addressed the brothers for three minutes each before the chairman "summed up".

"Well," he said, "I think that we all agree that the nomination should go to Jon Cruddas." All was going to plan until one member who had somehow evaded the nobbling process piped up and said: "Aren't we going to have a vote?" To which the chairman thoughtfully responded "Oh I don't think that will be necessary."

THE Central IT Unit (CITU) of the cabinet office didn't have to look far for help in drawing up a new report on how government computer contracts can be run more efficiently.

Since 1998 a panel of industry representatives has been advising the CITU on how electronic technology can best be used to modernise government. The senior executives concerned are extremely well informed about this area as they are drawn from, er, the very companies bidding for government information technology contracts.

Some of the organisations involved are so modest they asked not to be identified in the report. Just for the record then, the current membership of the industry consultative committee includes Tim Gbedemah, head of public policy at Andersens Consulting; Charles Cox, civil government and healthcare director at EDS; Carolyn McKewan of SEMA Group; and Gary Pusey, managing director of Siemens.

ONE issue not fully dealt with in the report is what to do if a software package continues to fail year after year, no matter how many upgrades and adjustments are made.

The Inland Revenue self-assessment system was notoriously unable to cope with its enormous task in 1998, the first year it was up and running. Since then 55,000 computers have been upgraded to accommodate new information, but mysteriously the Revenue has so far been unable to process any self-assessment claims for the last financial year.

There is of course nothing wrong with the software – except that it is incompatible with the Revenue's new £210m Y2K computer system. Curiously, nobody thought of this in advance, even though the software and the Y2K system are both designed by the same contractors... the *Eye*'s favourite computer company, EDS.

MAN IN THE EYE

IT IS always sad when old *Eye* favourites bow out of public life, and many readers will be mourning the announcement that Sir Norman Fowler is to stand down as Tory MP for Sutton Coldfield.

To lose the architect of the great pensions swindle of the late 1980s, the privatiser of the docks and a director of Group 4 all in one swoop is a terrible wrench. But not all is gloomy on the Sutton Coldfield front. For Sir Norman's replacement there is another old *Eye* favourite... Andrew Mitchell.

From 1987 to 1997 Mitchell was Tory MP for Gedling, Notts. Among Mr Mitchell's most outstanding contributions to public life, *Eye* readers will no doubt recall:

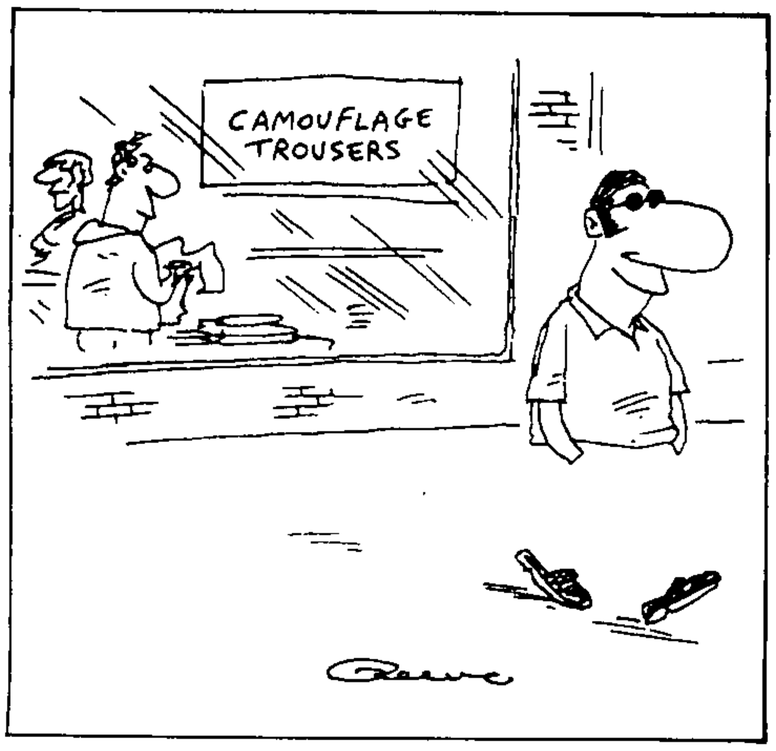
1His ability to see both sides of the question when Youngers closed a brewery with a loss of 250 jobs in his constituency. There was an outcry, especially from Notts county council. But Mr Mitchell refused to join in and even denounced a council leader for not understanding the issue. Mitchell's own understanding became a little clearer when a local paper published a story on its front page about a cheque for £5,000 made out by the brewery to the Gedling constituency Tory party. Mr Mitchell decided after all that he was against the closure and even unsuccessfully (and rather briefly) campaigned against it (see *Eyes* 881 and 910).

1His dedicated and heroic cover-up of the Hamilton-Fayed-Greer sleaze allegations when he mysteriously became a member of the Commons committee on members' interests in 1994, when still a junior whip. Single-handedly he managed to stop Greer and Fayed giving evidence to the committee and even managed to contrive a draw among the remaining committee members when a rogue Tory MP voted against his party. Mr Mitchell left the committee soon after its "investigation" of the Hamilton/ Greer affair was completed (*Eye* 912).

1His bold agreement, when he lost his seat, to take jobs with firms with whose businesses he had engaged while a minister. For instance, while a junior minister of social security he had commissioned the ill-fated NIRS2 national insurance computer from Andersen Consulting. No sooner was he out of the Commons than he was applying to be a senior adviser to Andersen Consulting.

This was too much even for the advisory committee on business appointments, under former Tory education secretary Lord Carlisle. The committee approved Mitchell's appointment to Andersen's "subject to his standing aside for 12 months from any involvement, direct or indirect, in any of the work which Andersen undertakes on behalf of the department of social security". The committee were similarly pedantic when it heard that Mitchell wanted to become a non-executive director of his old merchant bank Lazards. Once again he was cautioned to "stand aside" from any business between Lazards and his old department. (*Eye* 961)

It was hard to see why Mr Mitchell was so keen on such controversial appointments. He has notched up at least five other boardroom appointments at top companies. His business career, in short, looks every bit as promising as that of Sir Norman Fowler.



IT IS striking how many of the firms that school standards minister Estelle Morris recently said are in line for lucrative contracts to take over local education authorities are also "corporate partners" of the New Local Government Network (NLGN).

Arthur Andersen, Capita, KPMG, Nabarro Nathanson, Nord Anglia and Serco all pay the network for this partnership, in return for attending forums and briefing sessions with representatives of national and local government, and attendance at party conference fringe meetings.

Some of the privatisers have even managed to work their way on to the NLGN steering committee, including David Ball of Capita and Helen Randall, a senior solicitor from Nabarro Nathanson.

It looks as though the NLGN intends to go on shaping the future of schools regardless. In March it published a guide to "Best Value in Education", sponsored by Initial Education Personnel, a firm better known as Rentokil.

NOT all the new school privatisers have links to the NLGN. Some have demonstrated their excellence in serving the public sector elsewhere – such as WS Atkins, formerly the main subcontractor for the Atomic Energy Authority at Dounreay.

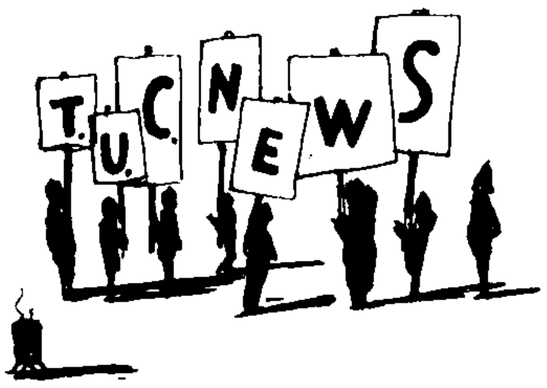
In 1998 the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) found that the "effects of contractorisation" meant the nuclear plant was out of management control, leading to reactors being shut down and WS Atkins sidelined. WS Atkins also ran the Aldermaston nuclear bomb factory with Hunting Engineering, until they were kicked off the contract following embarrassing radioactive leaks into nearby brooks.

WS Atkins does not restrict its activities to nuclear installations; it also does some military work. One of its recent triumphs was to win the contract to build barracks for 5,000 soldiers in Kosovo as part of the Hiberna consortium, together again with Hunting Engineering.

On 25 July 1999 WS Atkins announced that: "This fast track contract starts immediately with the design, construction and logistic phases, all of which are to be completed within six months." Chief Executive Michael Jeffries said: "We are pleased to be part of the winning consortium, and to have the opportunity to support the UK forces in carrying out their difficult role in Kosovo."

To date the camps are still not built. Squaddies struggled through the winter freezing in tents in minus -15 degrees centigrade, while American troops in Kosovo not only have a ready-built camp, but also gyms, chapels, a library and a burger bar. The Hiberna consortium blamed bad weather for their failure to build winter quarters.

The Tories and Fleet Street have been keen to highlight equipment letting down our boys in uniform over the past year, but the accommodation failures in Kosovo have not been so well reported. The *Times* even blamed the troops' homelessness on the Americans, claiming US troops mistakenly blew up a Serb barracks that the Brits wanted to squat in. Coincidentally, WS Atkins pays top Tory Archie Hamilton between £5,001 and £10,000 a year as a consultant.



THE future looks bleak for the MSF, the white collar union, which in the interests of independence broke away from the big engineering union several years ago and is now hell-bent on, er, getting back into the engineering union.

The publication in the *Guardian* of the imaginative expense account of general secretary Roger Lyons, which included a charge for a currant bun, is only the tip of an iceberg, it seems, for a union with deep financial problems.

A flurry of industrial tribunals, in which former union officers are claiming damages for unfair dismissal and discrimination, are set down for the next few months and could cost the union even more than the generous compensation paid to former officers, including John Chowcatt, the former assistant general secretary.

The union has been contacted recently by the certification officer and even by the Inland Revenue, both of whom would like more information on unauthorised loans and secret bank accounts. Another matter giving rise to calls for an inquiry is the vast expenditure on the campaign by union leaders to get back into the engineering-electrical union combine.

PS: Lyons's expenses are approved by an MSF executive member from Birmingham, John Gardner. Gardner runs a travel agency called Causeway Travel and surprised many union members some years back by successfully proposing that all the union's travel should be organised through one firm: er. Causeway Travel.

'Blackleg'

JOHANN LAMONT, Labour MSP for Glasgow Pollok, was referred to as "him" in the last *Eye*.

Ms Lamont is of course a woman, and we apologise to her and to the late Ms Johann Sebastian Bach *(Surely some mistake? Ed.)*.

FOCUS ON UKIP

NOW that hundreds of members have departed from the UK Independence Party, protesting at right-wing infiltration, are the remnants trying to clean up their act?

Apparently not. Although UKIP has denied the "smear" that it wishes to woo voters from the racist far-right, messages on the party's email bulletin board give a rather different picture. One branch chairman, Gregory Slysz, has written a glowing tribute to the British National Party and its "new, young and charismatic leader, Nick Griffin".

The BNP is "undoubtedly set to grow", he predicts; and "unless UKIP adopts a full manifesto which addresses the nation's main concerns, and which is free from the type of politically correct nonsense which has characterised UKIP policy in the past, it will be squeezed out. By pandering to the PC brigade, who will never vote for us anyway, we alienate the majority upon which our very survival depends."

Which is a none-too-coded way of saying that UKIP should drop its constitutional commitment to anti-racism and other such "nonsense". This seems to have struck a chord with Tony Bennett, political assistant to the party's new leader Jeffrey Titford MEP. "To those who argue that we should present the electorate with no policies apart from 'Keep the Pound' and 'Leave the EU', I say we must have some briefly-worded policies on some of the other key issues of the day, and immigration is one of them," he proposes in a confidential message to colleagues. Unless UKIP starts a vigorous campaign against immigrants and asylum-seekers, "we will undoubtedly lose votes to the BNP".

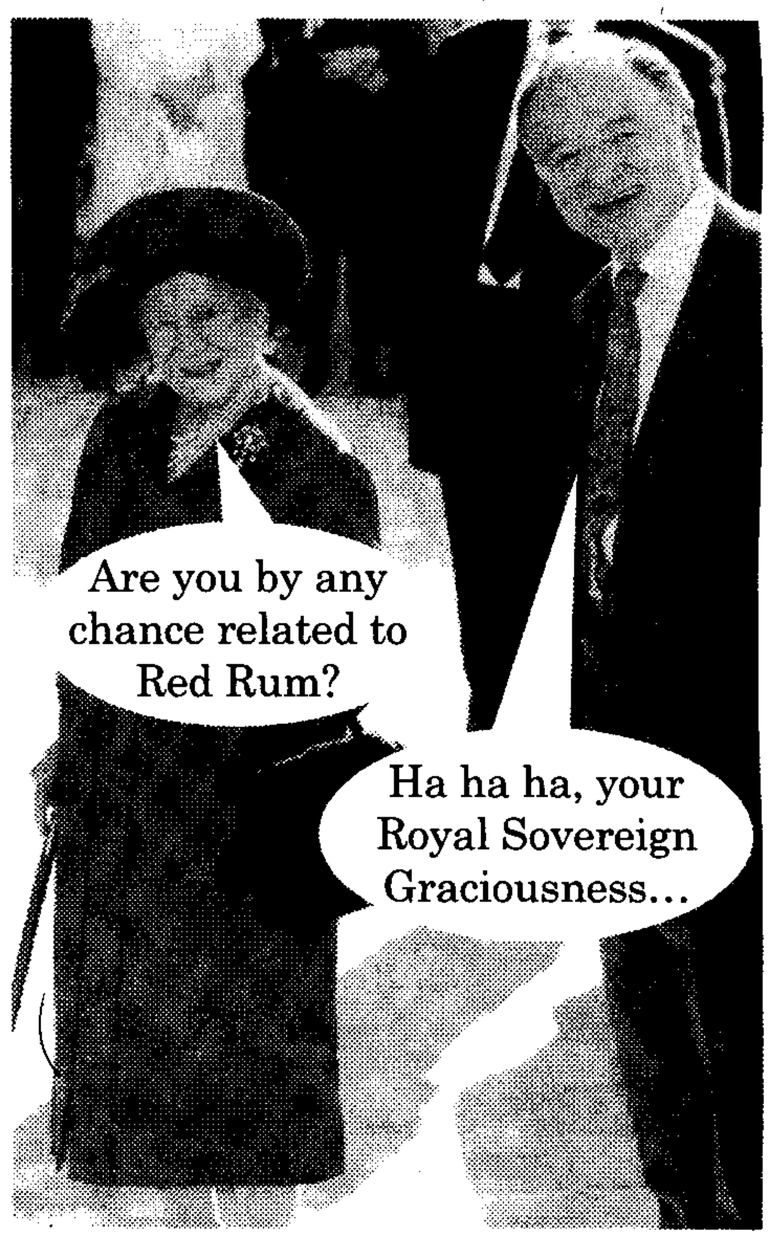
Meanwhile another UKIP member has sent out a fascinating letter explaining why he is staying with the party. After railing against the "negrefaction" of Britain and denouncing "the bloodline polluters", he suggests that people who talk of the "evils of apartheid" should be hanged.

Anyone seeking further evidence that the "smear" is not a million miles from the truth should have been in Bognor on the evening of 10 May, at an official UKIP meeting addressed by the new party chairman Mike Nattrass. This is the same Mike Nattrass who was previously on the national executive of New Britain, an openly racist party of the far-right run by the veteran anti-black crusader Dennis Delderfield.

Other ex-members of New Britain now prominent in UKIP include party secretary Bryan Smalley and Jeffrey Titford MEP. Although Titford denies ever having belonged to New Britain, Nattrass confirmed at Bognor that he had indeed been a member. Nattrass went on to insist that neither New Britain nor UKIP was racist – whereupon a UKIP member in the audience announced that he, at least, was racist and proud of it.

No wonder the British National Party's journal *Spearhead* is proposing that UKIP and the BNP should "come together in a single political force", to challenge "immigration and multi-racialism" and lead the anglo-saxon tribe towards, er, "national salvation".

NEW-LOOK RED KEN PT. 94



LONDON CALLING

TREVOR Phillips' very public outburst against "racism" in the Labour party – he made the allegation in the *Observer* a fortnight ago – had an immediate effect in Tottenham, where a special Labour panel was in the process of drawing up a shortlist of candidates to succeed the late Bernie Grant.

By startling coincidence Philips used his *Observer* article to demand that "more black candidates be selected in heartland seats". However, Bernie Grant's widow, his former researcher Sharon Grant, who is white, was widely perceived as the front-runner, commanding widespread support in the black community. But her politics – like those of her late husband – were to the left and alarm bells immediately began ringing.

Philips' timely intervention allowed Millbank to promote barrister and professional black man David Lammy on the basis that he was black and Sharon Grant wasn't.

Lammy – like Trevor Philips – had just got his feet under the table at the new Greater London assembly, having been elected barely a couple of weeks earlier (indeed, Bernie Grant had made strenuous attempts to promote Lammy to Labour's short-list for the assembly).

But while former Wales assembly leader Alun Michael had to apply to Labour's ruling NEC to escape from the Welsh assembly and apply for a Westminster seat – and ex-Welsh secretary Ron "Park Life" Davies was turned down when he tried – the rules were mysteriously dropped for the pushy Lammy. He duly became the Tottenham Labour candidate, beating the wife of the man who had done so much to promote him in the first place.

MEANWHILE a number of hacks were surprised to receive the following email from the "Trevor Phillips Campaign – adrianm@trevorphillips.org" on 17 May. It read: "This is just a short message to start the group off. A proper message will follow shortly." The email was despatched by Adrian McNenamin, a former Millbank junior spindoctor who had helped run the Dobson/Phillips campaign against Ken Livingstone. Except that McNenamin had long since left, ostensibly to be special adviser to Welsh secretary Paul Murphy.

Phillips had also been busy informing anyone who would listen that "Adrian has nothing to do with me anymore." Does this email mean that there is a revived "Trevor Phillips Campaign" with all the disloyalty which that would entail or is this just a mistake?

DOING THE ROUNDS

Cleft lip and palate surgery... again

IN 1997 M.D. first exposed the wide variation in quality of care in the UK for the treatment of children with cleft lip and palate. Large numbers of centres were doing relatively few operations with poor cosmetic results.

An audit in the north-west of England had found that 48 percent of children required major and often multiple reconstructive surgery, largely because of failure of the original surgery. In addition, Royal College of Surgeons guidelines were being flouted and a petty turf war was being fought by plastic surgeons and maxillo-facial surgeons to the detriment of patients (Eye 937).

Four months later, the Clinical Standards Advisory Group (CSAG) of the department of health echoed the *Eye*'s warnings. After investigating 297 children aged five and 277 aged 12 who had all undergone cleft repair in Britain, they found that 40 percent had poor dental bite, less than a third had a good lip appearance at the age of 12 and under half could speak with normal intelligibility at that age. The CSAG stated that of the 57 centres carrying out the operation, only six to eight could provide proof of good to excellent care and most did very little audit of anything.

Overall results were five to 12 times poorer than in the two European centres examined. Not only were surgeons performing operations they were not competent to do, but there was financial pressure from trust managers to do the operations locally, cheaply, occasionally and badly, rather than refer to a more expensive specialist centre.

CSAG recommended that the number of centres undertaking cleft work be reduced from 57 to between eight and 15 "so that expertise and resources are concentrated" and that there would be a clear specification of "the quality standards required for monitoring outcomes". In addition, "clinicians should agree a common database, ensure that all cleft patients are included and make the information available for comparative audit studies."

All fine and dandy – but neither CSAG nor the government has defined to whom this information should be made available. Over the last three years there have been protracted and bitter negotiations among hospitals and the various Cleft Implementation Groups (CIGs) to decide which units should make up the final eight to 15. But very little information has been disclosed to parents as to why some units have been recommended over others.

For example, of the 17 units sampled in the original CSAG report, only two were on a par with the best in Europe. However, no unit is identified by name, merely ranked A-S, with A scoring 44 out of 60 and S scoring 19.9. Parents might reasonably want to know the identity of the units to gauge the level of care they've received and – given that some of the centres chosen for the final cut may have performed poorly in the original audit – to seek assurances that changes have been made to get the centres up to scratch.

When John Wilkinson, Tory MP for Ruislip-Northwood, asked health secretary Alan Milburn for this information on 19 April he received the following written reply: "This information was given on a confidential basis to the CSAG research team, and was not made available. Since the research was carried out, the situation has changed and the information obtained is no longer correct."

Any chance of up to date information? Er... no. It seems parents are having to trust experts to make the best decisions on their behalf using secret information. The only unit M.D. has been able to identify from the audit is B, Chelsea and Westminster, which was the second best unit but is apparently not going to make the final cut. This suggests that some units may be chosen by geographical location rather than their proven record of expertise – precisely the same justification given for keeping child heart surgery in Bristol going in the early 90s despite poor results.

Indeed, the London CIG has said that the object of the appraisal of quality of care is "to assess future sites, not current provision" – ie a centre with a poor track record could be given the nod if it is in the right area.

It may be that all the centres eventually chosen provide very high quality care, but there is a justifiably deep suspicion among some parents. A decidedly low key "public consultation process" has started in some areas, but few parents are aware of it and important issues such as an assessment of the costs and time involved in travelling to the new centres will be overlooked. As one parent said: "I don't want to travel all the way to a Centre of Excellence unless they can prove that the service is better than what I'm getting already." Time to open up the books...

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

THERE were extraordinary scenes recently at the European parliament in Strasbourg, as one MEP after another got up to talk about "the Third Way". Not the Gospel according to Tony, it turns out – but toxic cowpats.

The MEPs were discussing a new Brussels regulation on the scourge of BSE. Somehow they have all picked up the notion, for which there is not a shred of scientific evidence, that in addition to the possibility of cattle catching BSE from their feed or their mothers, there may be a third way: through exposure to the dung of infected animals.

This discussion was typical of the woolly scientific illiteracy with which the MEPs debated every aspect of the proposed regulation, providing a classic instance of the chaotic fashion in which laws are now extruded from the Brussels-Strasbourg machine.

One key requirement is that whenever in future any animal in the EU is found to have BSE, the entire herd must be slaughtered. There is no scientific evidence to justify such a hugely costly and destructive exercise. "Whole herd slaughter" may be a remedy appropriate to infectious diseases like foot and mouth, but it is irrelevant to BSE, which is not passed on by contact.

At least a handful of MEPs were sufficiently clued-up to recognise the disastrous implications of this proposal and protested vigorously. Officials of the relevant directorate in the commission even then denied to journalists that the regulation was intended to make herd slaughter compulsory. But when their commissioner – Irishman David Byrne, who is fast winning a reputation for considerable arrogance – came to reply to the debate, he overruled his own officials by assuring parliament that herd slaughter would now be official policy and, despite the critical speeches made by at least half a dozen members, thanked the MEPs for the "unanimous" welcome they had given his proposals.

Perhaps the oddest thing about his new law, however, was not picked up by anyone. Buried in the lengthy preamble is a requirement that "slaughter techniques presenting a risk of causing brain material to contaminate other tissues should not be permitted".

Although there is no subsequent reference to this in the regulation, if taken literally it means the customary method used to kill cattle by driving a bolt into their head is to be made illegal because it punctures the animal's brain and in theory could therefore lead to shreds of brain tissue passing into its blood stream.

If this "captive stunning bolt" technique, used in slaughterhouses all over Europe, is made illegal, the only alternative method would be to install "gassing pens" to kill the animals with carbon-dioxide. These are so expensive only the very largest abattoirs could afford them. The vast majority would simply have to close down.

If this is really what Mr Byrne and his officials are after, it seems very strange to introduce such a devastating new legal requirement, merely by means of an arcane sub-clause in the preamble to a regulation. And if they don't mean that, why include it at all?

'Even Newer Muckspreader'

"I see you're growing officials for the ministry of agriculture"

SIGNAL FAILURES

Summit amiss

THE Association of Train Operating Companies (Atoc) went to last week's rail summit ready to rubbish the failsafe device that stops trains passing red signals in many countries and to enthuse over an inferior device which is cheaper.

A briefing document for Atoc's representatives at the summit was leaked to the *Eye*. It shows that any questions about automatic train protection (ATP) – the device that would have prevented all fatal train crashes of recent years – were to be deflected with answers about the cheaper imitation, train protection warning system (TPWS), which is ineffective above 75mph. The briefing added: "Although trains [using TPWS] may pass a red signal, they will be travelling considerably more slowly." So that's all right, then.

After the Paddington safety summit in October transport supremo John Prescott told the public that the industry would continue to introduce ATP on high-speed trains – ie on trains not fully covered by TPWS. But train operators have different intentions. They want to counter the risk of faster trains passing red signals, as at Southall in 1997, with "TPWS+" – but it won't work above 100mph.

If questioned further about ATP installation across the network, Atoc's people were primed to mislead by responding: "The system could not be implemented for around 10 years." That is the time needed to install ATP on *all* routes, including quiet branch lines where it would be of little relevance. ATP is widespread in continental Europe and used by four British operators. It could – but won't – be rolled out over the next couple of years on the busiest express routes, such as King's Cross to Edinburgh.

Although that line has become busier, Great North Eastern Railway has lone drivers and only the antiquated automatic warning system (AWS) in the cabs of its 125mph trains.

Back in 1991 the pilot ATP on Great Western was to cover its costs by 1999 because a second pair of eyes was mandatory in the cab of every train running above 110mph without ATP. ATP would therefore reduce the drivers on the payroll. GNER and Great Western Trains abolished the two-pairs-of-eyes rule to save money, but not to pay for ATP. Overnight the financial case for ATP became harder to prove and services on both routes became less safe, as the Southall accident showed.

GNER has just started running trains equipped with working ATP – Eurostar trains which use it in the Channel Tunnel, France and Belgium – but the device is switched off on GNER as the tracks have no ATP equipment.

Atoc was ready to claim at the rail summit that ATP would cost £14m per equivalent life saved. Most industries make calculations of this sort, dividing the cost of a safety initiative by the deaths it would save (with 10 serious injuries equal to one death). Atoc's figure dates from the mid-1990s, when Railtrack wanted to discredit ATP prior to its flotation in 1996, but it has not been reassessed since. The figure also includes the cost of applying ATP to secondary lines – where accidents are rare – as that helps inflate the cost per life saved. Fitting ATP only where it is urgently needed would produce a lower figure.

Atoc was expecting politicians or civil servants to ask why money for ATP had not been found. The real answer is that politicians and civil servants refused to pay up as they were bent on privatising British Rail at breakneck speed. The ATP money went to consultants and lawyers and on meeting the doubled subsidy requirement. An obligation to install and operate ATP could have made some rail franchises unsaleable.

But Atoc would not be so bold as to blame government, as that would amount to admitting ATP was and is worth having. Instead Atoc's briefing document revises history by saying the decision to abandon ATP was taken by the rail industry (as opposed to Whitehall mandarins and Tories) in 1995.

The industry had had to consider "whether to put people at greater risk on the roads by making rail tickets too expensive for them to afford". If ATP really was binned out of concern for people's safety, how come Virgin and others now put people at greater risk on the roads by making rail tickets unaffordable – and without investing a penny in ATP?

'Dr B Ching'

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

GUN MOANIN'

PEOPLE in Leeds are asking what the police are doing to stop the shooting war in the city which, at the last count, has seen four deaths and 11 woundings in two months. Inspector Knacker, it seems, has been caught on the hop by at least two drug turf wars.

But locals need have no fear. Enter "drugs tsar" and former West Yorkshire chief constable Keith Hellawell, who used a visit to Leeds to assure the public that they were not at risk because the gangsters were only shooting their own kind. This echoed the view of West Yorkshire police authority chairman, Cllr Neil Taggart, who responded to the rattle of gunfire thus: "Locals are not at risk. It is between the criminal fraternity."

So that's all right, then — particularly for the locals in Taggart's Chapel Allerton ward, where several of the shootings have taken place. Taggart is particularly keen to impress his electorate, having presided over the unpopular sale of the former Chapeltown police station for luxury apartments in defiance of residents' pleas for a community centre. This is the same Cllr Taggart who once declared that he would lie down in the road rather than see a local school sold off for anything other than educational purposes (*Eye* 951). Alas, the former school is now, er, the new Chapeltown police station.

HB SAUCE

THE massive backlog of unprocessed housing benefit (HB) claims in Croydon, currently more than 2,700, has forced the council to give pisspoor computer contractor CSL £88,000 to set up a new benefits call centre and pay for 10 of its staff.

Housing chair Coun Clive Fraser admitted: "It is clear that CSL's current facility cannot cope with the number of people who want to contact somebody about their council tax or benefits enquiries... we cannot carry on for the next 12 months without taking some urgent action."

CSL, a subsidiary of Deloitte and Touche, is a worthy recipient of taxpayers' money. For its troubles in failing to deal promptly with housing benefit claims in Croydon and other boroughs, causing considerable stress and hardship to many claimants, it recorded a pre-tax profit in the year ending 31 May 1999 of more than £3m.

BALLS-UP

HARD on settling for £9,000 an unfair dismissal case against one teacher arising out of flawed redundancy procedures, Neath and Port Talbot council has got itself into another expensive tangle thanks to its head of personnel in education, Dick Lewis.

It is spending tens of thousands of pounds defending a case at Coedffrainc junior school at Skewen, near Neath, where Lewis has taken a keen personal interest in head teacher Sheena Ball's efforts to get rid of Cerys John. John, a special needs teacher, made the unpardonable error of testifying in support of a fellow teacher in another employment case against the school.

Ball decided to "upgrade" the special needs pupils, thereby "reducing" their numbers from 58 to 18 pupils at a stroke, to the outrage of parents. At the same time the council reduced the amount of money available for special needs pupils — there were fewer of them, see? Result: Cerys John was dismissed without proper consultation or appeal.

An employment tribunal subsequently decided that she had been unfairly dismissed, finding Ball's "upgrading" of the special needs kids "strange and disturbing". The panel ended its reserved decision by expressing the hope that the school would take John back as a full-time teacher.

Lewis, however, had already advised governors that the school could not afford to do so. Yet the local education authroity (LEA) can, apparently, afford to spend tens of thousands more on m'learned friends to appeal against the tribunal's decision. In the meantime, Coedffrainc has replaced part of the work of a special needs teacher by two part-time, unqualified assistants, one of whom, Lesley Smith, just happens to be the wife of Jonathan Smith, deputy chairman of governors.

BRAVE NEW WEDD

BYGONES are bygones — again — in Doncaster, beacon authority of sleaze.

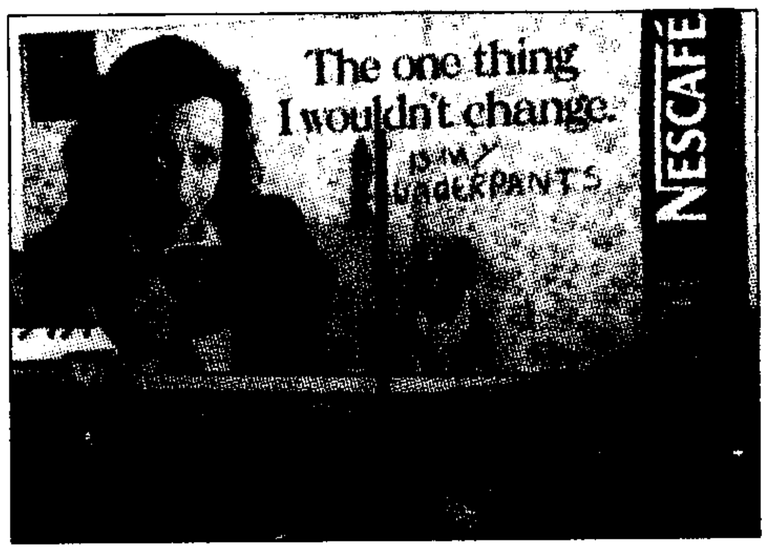
When Labour leader Colin Wedd announced new committees at the council agm, his fellow Edlington councillor Michael McAteer, judged by a magistrate to be too old and infirm for a community service order after pleading guilty to robbing the citizens of the benighted borough, announced his intention to serve out his remaining two years on the council gravy train, and was immediately nominated for a committee place by Wedd.

McAteer is the twelfth Labour councillor to be convicted since 1997. He and another convicted thief, former Labour, now "Independent", councillor Steve Judge (he resigned from Labour because his subs were due) then joined the comrades in the free piss-up-stuffing-of- face-and-as-many-free-cigars-as-you-can-grab known in Donny as "the mayor's banquet and ball".

Arrests so far: 23 Labour councillors, one Tory, 12 associated officers, contractors and developers. At least 10 more Labour councillors are expected to be arrested on expenses fiddling charges, including five from

GRAFFITI CORNER *Harringay*

Submitted by **D. Stevens.**



Wedd's new, grandly-entitled "leader's board" (cabinet). Police are expected to begin lifting councillors on major planning charges any day.

● PROVING less of a soft touch for CSL is the Lib-Lab-run Taunton Deane council in Somerset, which has put the company on notice that it will instantly terminate its remaining contract if CSL does not cooperate with the voluntary handing back of the revenues and benefits service. Councillors decided CSL was a waste of time just 16 months after awarding it the contract to run HB and council tax at the end of 1998.

"Tired, depressed, listless... Have you just returned from a family holiday?""

HACKNEY MARRIAGE

THE political temperature may be rising nationally, but in the benighted London borough of Hackney it is all sweetness and light. The Labour and Tory groups have set up a clandestine administration, excluding the Lib-Dems, the second largest group on the hung council.

Leaked minutes of the inaugural meeting state that the "secret" cabinet "is intended to operate outside the formal committee process" and be the forum for making strategic council decisions. Wasting little time, the meeting agreed that ITNET's disastrous housing benefit contract should be renewed and that Stoke Newington town hall should be sold, so it can be converted into luxury flats.

The new chumminess explains, but does not excuse, why 73-year-old Tory councillor Joe Lobenstein, under investigation for failing to declare interests at the Stamford Hill planning committee (see *Eye* 981), has been elected for a record fourth term as mayor.

● JOHN HARWOOD, chief executive of Oxfordshire county council, is affectionately known as "the uphill gardener" to colleagues and councillors. This has nothing at all to do with his sexual orientation, but refers to his *Who's Who* entry, which lists his recreations as walking, cooking and, er, "uphill gardening". Harwood, who is married and has a daughter, innocently included it as a hobby because... his garden is on a steep slope. Sniggering staff were too scared to tell their boss why "uphill gardening" was not the sort of hobby he should list, until a plucky press officer tactfully explained why it might be best for the entry to be amended next year.

Turn Again Livingstone!
I HEREBY PLEDGE MY SUPPORT FOR THE EURO. IT'S ABSOLUTELY VITAL AT THIS TIME.
TO BOOST LONDON'S COMMERCE?
NO. TO ANNOY TONY BLAIR!

FYE TV

Lock, Stock... (Channel 4)
Foot In The Door (BBC2)

IN ANY industry desperate for hits, the cross-media transfer is always tempting. If consumers have liked an idea once, there's a strong chance they'll buy it again in slight disguise. So *The Lion King* and *The Graduate* are available not just in video shops but now in live action versions on the West End stage as well. Even the purely theatrical shows are almost all revivals. It's safer commercially to appeal to memory than to intrepidity.

And **Lock, Stock...** (Channel 4) is a drama series spun off from Guy Ritchie's hit British film which had the unlikely effect of turning the football bruiser Vinnie Jones into a Hollywood movie star. There's a current trend in television for putting a famous creator's name before the title with a possessive apostrophe: Jackie Collins's *Lucky Chances*, Fergeal Keane's *Forgotten Britain*. Frankly, Channel 4 is to be congratulated for its discretion in not calling the thing Madonna's Boyfriend's *Lock Stock...*

In fact, Mr Maddy has been distancing himself from the project in recent interviews, stressing that he was only partly involved in the opening episode and nothing at all after that. It's a wise move. Apart from *M*A*S*H*, which, perhaps significantly, grew out of a movie which had made little impact – cinematic spin-offs to television have usually disappointed an audience already hopefully disposed towards them. *Fame* was a trashy appendix to a classy film. The TV version of *The Client* merely showed that John Grisham had taken the characters to the limits of their interest in book and movie versions.

The real problem with *Lock, Stock* is that the original movie was a certain kind of film: one which would always work best on an audience which knew nothing about it. The overall standard of British films is so low that there was dazed gratitude at the critics' screenings when this passable piece of work appeared on the screen. Public audiences too responded to a series of pleasant surprises: that Vinnie Jones could act, that the script was an unusually slick Tarantino English imitation.

THAT'S THE GREAT THING ABOUT THESE DVD'S, THEY ALSO SHOW YOU THE MAKING OF THE FILM
$20 MILLION, TO STAR IN THIS CRAP!?
OK. $30 MILLION, LAST OFFER!
WHEN DO I START?
PAUL WOOD

With the TV *Lock, Stock*, the equation is dangerously reversed. Audiences assume it will be good. Standards of writing and acting which surpassed low cinematic expectations fail to meet high television ones. What you get is a series of creaky scams – involving race horses and porn videos – interspersed with formulaic violence (one villain is a pyromaniac) and self-conscious Mockney repartee in which the every sentence seems to end with "innit".

And there's no Vinnie Jones because he's gone to Hollywood along with the other most impressive members of the cast. With the movie's director only keeping a watching brief on the pilot between pre-natal classes, the telly *Lock, Stock* is a bit like that historian's joke about the Holy Roman Empire being neither Holy or Roman... or an Empire.

At least the latest BBC2 business show **Foot In The Door** is a more familiar form of self-plagiarism: drawing from other TV shows rather than movies. Most telly these days seems to be created on the same principle as breeding race horses: crossing two good runners to produce a third. *Foot In The Door* is by *On The Floor* out of *Blind Date*.

Each week, a trio of contestants is tried out for a single job. In the opening episode, chef Charlie Rushton puts three potential junior under-cooks on trial: make that by *On The Floor* out of *Blind Date* and *Masterchef*.

Lee, Charlotte and Kirsty give jokey summaries of their personalities, assisted by their families. Then each cooks a meal while an on-screen clock counts down the time. The potential employer comments on their progress with that jocular brutality which has become the prevailing tone of the new breed of audience-friendly business shows.

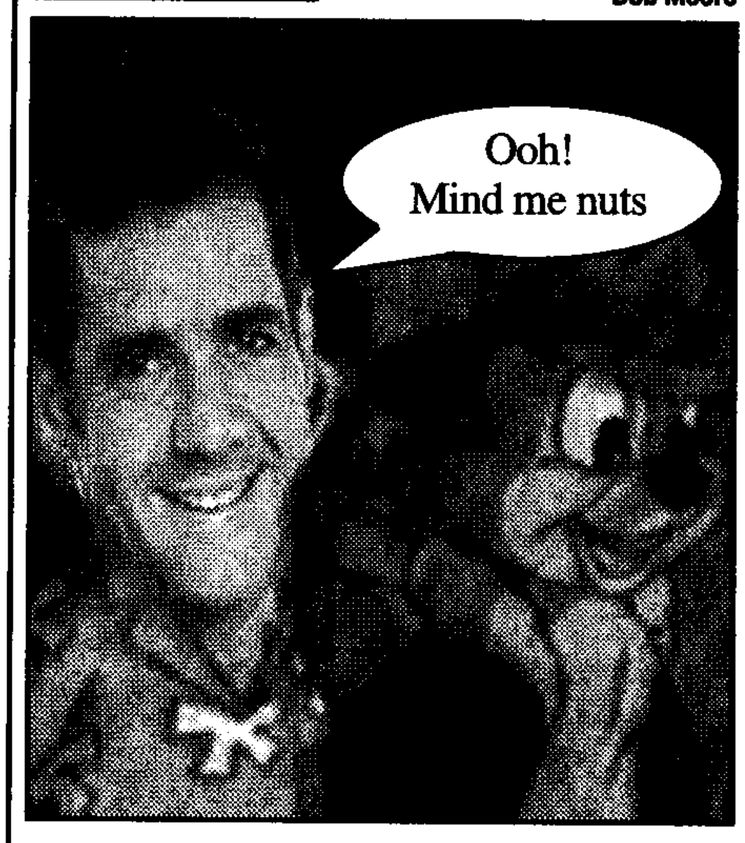
"The one that surprises me is Kirsty," growls Rushton. "Already you can see she's got a pair of bollocks." One job-seeker is warned: "That's not blanching. That's boiling the fuck off them."

Five years ago this format would have seemed extraordinary for a business show: an antidote to Peter Jay's pieces on monetarism. But – as with *Lock, Stock* – a format which depended on ambushing an unsuspecting audience is attempted again on an audience which has been offered this menu too often. The problem with believing that it's safer to give an audience the same thing again is that they may feel they've seen it all before.

'Square Eyes'

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore



Chip N' Dale Winton

MEDIA NEWS

NO sooner had Greg Dyke settled into the director-general's office than he announced a departure from John Birt's "remote" management style by making a plea for a "happy BBC" free of its "moaning culture". Nobody can say he's not been true to his word.

There was no moaning at all from the board of governors when Christopher "Pigling" Bland decided that Birt should pocket a further £370,000 of licence-payer's dosh as a parting gift.

There was no complaint either when the absurdly grand Will Wyatt, the utterly useless "Bonking" Rod Lynch and the widely despised Ron Neil were "released" with what the BBC press office calls "similar deals".

So what's keeping senior managers so happy? Well the dosh certainly helps, but so too does the suspicion that the "slash-and-burn" cost-saving revolution that Dyke's spin doctors sold to so many gullible media editors may be less radical than expected.

After all, even the most useless of them, Matthew Bannister, has survived the cull, transforming himself from head of production into the not-a-penny-less head of marketing. So far the promised belt-tightening has resulted in a ban on croissants, an end to the provision of posh cars for wives and a ban on excessive minicab accounts.

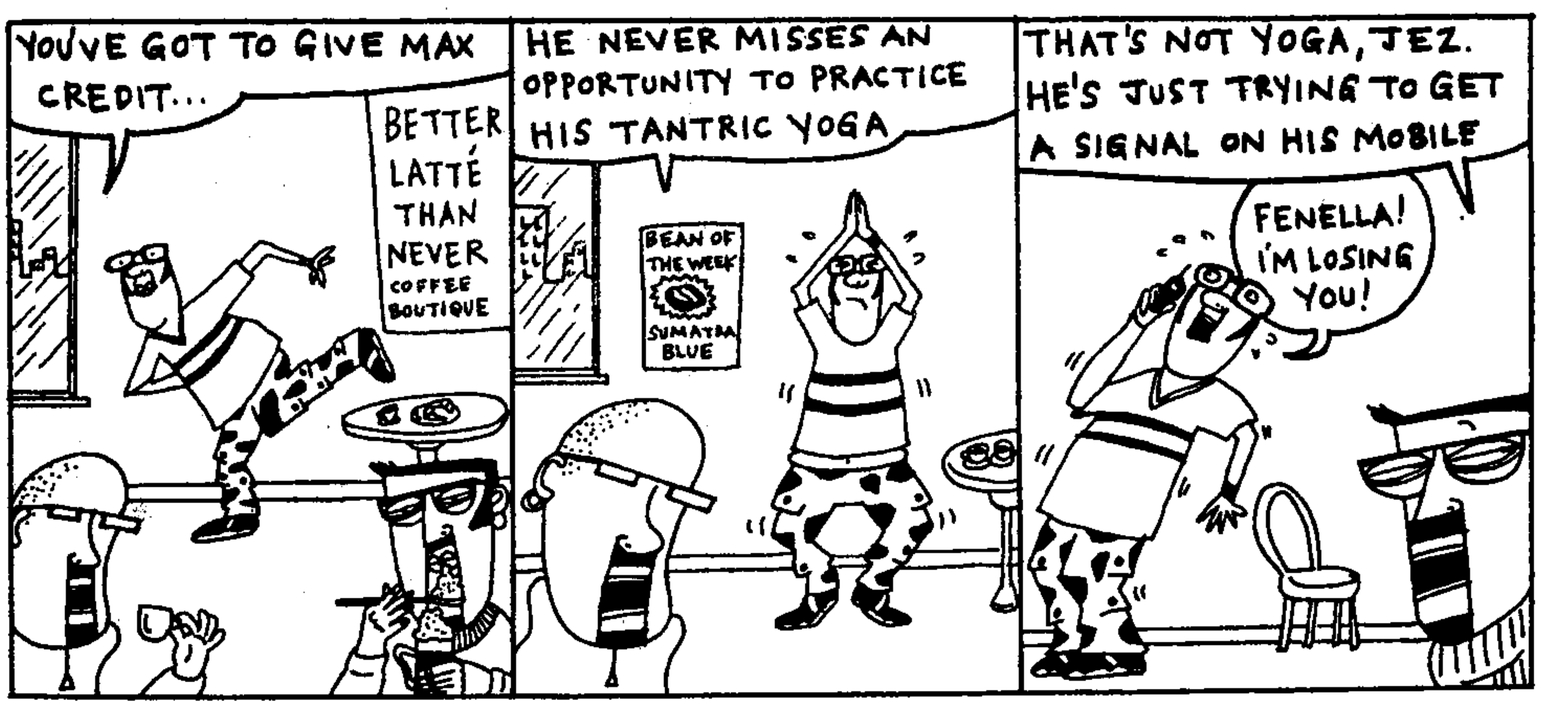
THE BBC proudly unveiled its brand new "Culture Café" coffee bar at Broadcasting House last week, complete with widescreen digital TV.

One small problem: the TV now seems to be permanently switched to, er, SKY. Aren't the wonders of BBC Choice good enough for Coffee Bar staff?

one foot in the grave
THE BBC HAVE PROMISED TO IMPROVE THEIR IMAGE OF OLDER PEOPLE...
BY NOT SHOWING THEM LOOKING BEWILDERED
DODDERY...
AND COMPLETELY OUT OF TOUCH...
One doesn't believe it!
BANNED
Ken Pyne

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE MAX CREDIT...
BETTER LATTÉ THAN NEVER COFFEE BOUTIQUE
HE NEVER MISSES AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE HIS TANTRIC YOGA
BEAN OF THE WEEK
SUMATRA BLUE
THAT'S NOT YOGA, JEZ. HE'S JUST TRYING TO GET A SIGNAL ON HIS MOBILE
FENELLA! I'M LOSING YOU!

DAVID DIMBLEBY must look to his laurels: Channel 4 intends to start a late-night current-affairs discussion show for "young persons", in which panellists debate the great issues of the day.

According to a brief prepared by C4 commissioning editor Darren Bender, "the live audience is regularly asked to add comments but most importantly they can inspire the debate with specific questions".

Just like *Question Time*, then? Er, not quite: the pilot programme, we learn, features "people who turned 16 the night before (1 funky, 1 gay, 1 Muslim). All the questions for this episode are of course about sex". Of course: what else are "young persons" interested in?

The working title of the programme, Bender reveals, is *Bullshit*.

BOB EGGINGTON, the recently departed project manager of BBC's News Online, liked to boast to his bosses that he was "a good sacker", supplying them with endless email updates of each purge.

But when Tony "Head Prefect" Hall announced that Bob himself had no place in his latest reshuffled top team, the emails suddenly stopped coming. There was no farewell party and no grovelling adieu in *Ariel* – only a whisper from Bob to jubilant colleagues reporting that he was off "to make millions with my new dotcom venture".

Scoffing hacks reckon it will be called dream-on-bob.com.

MODESTY BLAZE

The first in an occasional series featuring ludicrously self-regarding hacks...

"My departure in March from my job as political editor of ITN... seems to have been the catalyst for an eruption on the broadcasting slopes," Michael Brunson wrote in the *Sunday Times*, explaining Robin Oakley's subsequent departure from the BBC.

But did Brunson's retirement actually have anything to do with it? As he admitted a few paragraphs later: "I heard from a top BBC source, long before Robin himself, that they were determined to replace him as political editor before the next general election since they did not think he was up to snuff."

BRIT CLASSICAL AWARDS

THOUGH purporting to offer "the cream of the classical music world", the pitiful parade of tat and tinsel that was the Brit Classical Awards (as seen recently on ITV) turned out to be the most embarrassing non-event of the year.

Many expected more – especially those at the Albert Hall who paid £80 a head to watch Charlotte Church, Vanessa Mae et al go through their ghastly kiddie-kitsch routines, while others at £250 a head ate their way through an indifferent meal. "It's an expensive joke," spluttered one, as two of them left at the interval. The number of empty seats in the second half confirmed their opinion.

It was obvious at the planning stage that these ill-fated awards would amount to nothing more than tired old tosh. A pretentious letter arrived on the desks of various movers 'n' shakers in the music business telling them they were honoured by an invitation to join "The Academy" of the awards. Whatever that might be.

They were invited to return a reply slip that said, in so many words, what an honour, joy and all-round life-enhancing experience it would be to accept. Some movers 'n' shakers were dim enough to accept without question, but those who tried to discover more found it difficult – not least because "The Academy" turned out to be a female events producer who wasn't available on the phone number supplied and didn't return messages.

In fact the Brit Classicals had very little to do with celebrating "the cream of the classical music world" and rather more to do with celebrating certain artists who were making serious money for their record companies and could make even more with a bit of TV promotion. In other words, it was all a publicity stunt and "The Academy" was little more than a bunch of unpaid stooges, bussed in to lend a veneer of substance.

Academy members had voting powers but could only vote from pre-determined shortlists. Any resemblance between these and something you might consider of significance in the world of classical music was purely accidental.

The choice for Young British Artist featured Charlotte Church and Vanessa Mae. The choice for Best Female Artist featured Charlotte Church again, plus Lesley Garrett and a singer called Izzy. Best Male Artist included the marketably blind but sadly average Andrea Bocelli, together with the man who wrote the score for *Shakespeare in Love*. Most bizarre of all, the Best Ensemble category had Paul McCartney, the score for *Braveheart* and the latest score for *Star Wars*.

That the shortlists were apparently drawn up by record company executives, their lawyers and promoters says it all. But it is hard to say whose interest was served by the shambolic display of mediocrity served up by way of live entertainment. As one member of the English Chamber Orchestra (who had to accompany it all) said afterwards: "It was so embarrassing I gave serious thought to wearing a wig and pretending it wasn't me. But in the end we just sat there and laughed."

Vanessa Mae shouted, stamped and scraped her way through the worst performance of the storm from *The Four Seasons* in collective memory. This was followed by an arrangement of Tartini's *Devil's Trill* cunningly designed to leave out the trills. Which are the tricky bits.

Ms Mae was not even the low point. That came with a desperate diva by the name of Filippa Giordano, billed as up-and-coming but by now distinctly been and gone. The ECO was visibly beside itself with mirth.

Afterwards, Radio 3 listeners might have heard an explosive exchange on the evening in which record company boss Bill Holland dismissed any criticism as "elitist". Against him critic Michael White said that if this was the cream of classical music, he'd settle for the skimmed milk. He is not alone.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Pseuds Corner

This is the beginning of something enormous in British art, a re-ordering, a great tempest of cultural energy which will blow apart all the old certainties, all the traditional hierarchy of law and money and God.

SIR ANTHONY CARO
(on the opening of Tate Modern)
Guardian

I have a theory there's women throughout history who've become icons: Marilyn Monroe, Joan Collins, Elizabeth Taylor, Barbara Windsor, and now Gillian [Taylforth]. It's her generosity, her openness, the way she wears her heart on her sleeve, that appeals to people.

KIM TAYLFORTH
Sunday Times Magazine

The first time I didn't quite believe it. It was, I imagined, a close-up, a detail of a bigger picture. But no. On the screen is [Steve] McQueen's nipple, and the patch of goosebumped skin around it. Fingers and thumb hove into view, huge and purposeful. They pull at the nipple, yank and tweak it erect. The fingers go into a blurred frenzy, and it is clear that at times, McQueen is more concerned with pleasuring himself than with staying in focus in front of the lens.

For long moments, the nipple remains alone. The bare chest looks like a lunar landscape, the nipple and its aureola an image from the dark side of the moon. Then he's at it again. I'm reminded of Billie Whitelaw's mouth, filling the screen in the TV production of Samuel Beckett's Not I. The speaking mouth, that wet, fleshy, involuted organ, eventually becomes something alien and alarmingly mobile. Now the hairless nipple looks like an eye. The nipple looks back, all seeing, like the jailer's eye framed in the cell peephole in Jean Genet's great film Chant d'Amour...

ADRIAN SEARLE
Guardian

When you have eaten too many sheep pellets, the sea can seem contradictory. It is wild and it is predictable. It screams softly like the aeroplane engines in a Gary Glitter song.

ALASTAIR McKAY
Scotsman

***Shaft* Mambo Italiano (Wonderboy)**
... Like a thousand Cuban mice driving by your house in sportscars at dusk, this is the kind of music that Gypsies play on waltzers to increase the gastric tempo

of puke and fear. Probably the last record some holidaymaker will hear before being abducted.

MICHAEL HOLDEN
Guardian Weekend Guide

I enjoy varieties of sausage from all over the world and discovered a tiny shop over 10 years ago with the most amazing selection called Antica Marcelleria Falornia in the small town of Greve in Chianti, Tuscany. My absolute favourite is flavoured with wild fennel which had been handpicked from the local mountains. You can also find a delicious ham there which has been buried in the ground in the ashes of a wood fire for two years.

LARS NITTVE
(director of Tate Modern)
Weekend FT

CONTRIBUTORS: Jason Neville, Ben Tisdall, John Gammon, Jim McCabe. A. Roberts, Chris Rodgers.

£10 paid for entries

Letters

Eye's right

Sir,

We've all heard of the dreaded "Curse of Gnome", but now the "Curse of Cyclops" (issue 1002, 5+9 down)?

I think we should be told (warned?)!

D. AINSWORTH,
London W1P 1AQ

Smart arse

Sir,

I was interested to read this morning in Eye 1002, in the Colour Section, that "the smart money is on the chancellor" winning the battle over which missile the government will buy for the new Eurofighter. By coincidence my newspaper reported that yesterday Geoff Hoon had rejected the cheaper American missile in favour of the more expensive British-French version. I look forward to reading in the next issue why the smart money should have been on the defence secretary.

Yours faithfully,
TOM BEAZLEY,
Henley-on-Thames, Oxon.

Livewatch

Sir,

May I suggest a new column for the Eye? "Livewatch", for the most pointless of the generally pointless segments of the TV news where they insist on going "live" to a reporter at a place where something is either going to happen several hours in the future, or has already happened several hours in the past. In both scenarios, there is nothing to see or report, but, hey, look! Our O/B crew can read maps and manage to get somewhere!

I only suggest it because I challenge readers to report sighting a more ridiculous "Live from..." scenario than ITV's 11pm News of 22 May, wherein respected (although clearly not by his new employers) political editor John Sargeant was "Live from Downing Street" in the dark at 11:07pm for a piece about the Blair baby. What were they hoping would happen — Tony to open a first floor window to declare, "Look, I'm changing a nappy now"?

Yours Annoyed That
This Wound Me Up,
NICK PYCRAFT,
Woking.

Fund of knowledge

Sir,

I am writing to correct some of the errors in your article on fundraising at Birkbeck (Berkbeck, 19 May 2000). Professor Hobsbawm is the patron and not the chair of the anniversary appeal committee, which includes 12 Birkbeck graduates. The advice of the committee is greatly valued by Birkbeck. Direct fundraising activity is carried out by a team of staff including the director of external relations, my private secretary, the events and alumni officer and a part-time development adviser. To date we have raised £200,000. We will of course be delighted to receive further contributions which should be sent to Birkbeck, Malet Street WC1E 7HX.

PROFESSOR TIM O'SHEA,
Master, Birkbeck, University of London.

LUVVIES

What do you like about yourself?

"Being a vegan. I became one about two years ago and I know that now I will never ever be anything else. What else? I like to think I have a real integrity about my life and that I serve as a good example to other girls."

ALICIA SILVERSTONE
(Love's Labour's Lost)
Independent on Sunday

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Lookalike

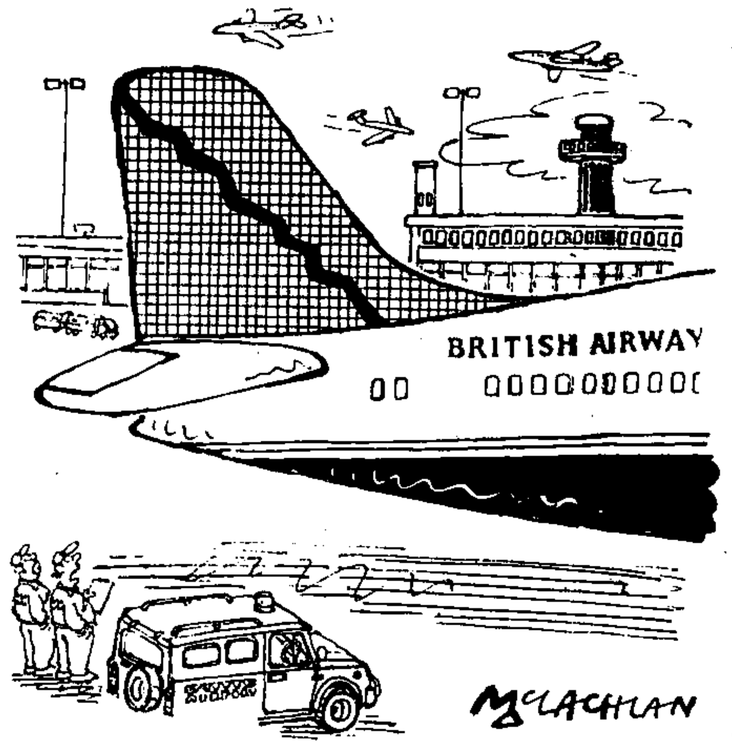
Smart

Fry

Sir,

Is there any relationship (family or otherwise) between Alec Smart of the Express "Puzzled" magazine, and Mr Stephen Fry. It surely is of public interest to know.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN WALSH,
Ryde, Isle of Wight.



"It's their latest tail-fin design"

Dumb and Dumbartonshire

Sir,

*It was with great sadness that I read Piloti this week (1001) to learn of the disintegration, **once again**, of Overtoun House in Dumbartonshire, Scotland. I do wish the council could get their act together.*

I would like to take issue, however, with the statement that the house has mostly been empty since 1970. I was one of a happy band of volunteers in the late seventies who spent all their free time doing the place up. After a long battle with the authorities, the Macindoe family were given permission to overhaul the place and set it up as a Christian Conference Centre. This they did with great care and attention to detail and the house saw many happy years of use by various churches and Christian groups and later by outward bound groups who used it as a base.

After all the work done there for very little monetary return, it makes me very angry to see it left to decay once again. It is a beautiful place, set in beautiful grounds and countryside – something must be done!!!

Yours faithfully,
EDITH PECK (MISS),
Woodbridge.

Avon calling

Sir,

Re: Your article "Doing The Rounds — What No drugs (again)?" of 1001, 5 May 2000. My advice to Avon health authority and indeed the NHS is simple: choose between constipation, carbuncles, or cancer.

The NHS drugs budget for the first two conditions equals that for the third.

Yours sincerely,
PROF J. GORDON McVIE,
FmedSci, MD, FRCP,
Director General, the Cancer Research Campaign.

***PS:** I already live in Bristol – that's why I worry about Avon!*

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

LIZ HURLEY GOES NAKED FOR HER NEW ESTÉE LAUDER CAMPAIGN:
LIZ, IT'S SO BRAVE OF YOU TO POSE LIKE THAT
CLIK CLIK
I KNOW,...YOU CAN'T SEE MY TITS AT ALL!
CLIK CLIK CLIK
THE SUN

Load of bull?

Sir,

Muckspreader (Eye 1002) describes visits by a MAFF inspector to the farm of Jim Webster. The inspector encounters a situation where farm records are clearly not being properly maintained, animals are being kept in filthy conditions [muck buttons in May = RSPCA] and Mr Webster cannot either determine the sex of cattle or present all of his animals for an inspection. All enough to arouse the suspicions of any auditor resulting in a proper stock take [pardon the pun]. Where's the story?

Muckspreader's comments on EU non-checks on Italian olive groves are incorrect. The commission operates an excellent system for verifying olive tree declarations.

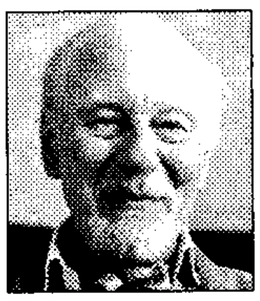
Only articles worthy of publication in future, please.

GARRY GILL,
Dept. of Geography, University of Nottingham.

I-SPY

Submitted by Mrs A.J.F. Steward, Mark Farmaner, Mrs Jenny Major, A.N. Other. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

NON-LUVVIE



Gielgud was notably unpretentious about his craft, explaining that he tried to embrace simplicity and avoid fuss and trickery: "The point is to find the style of the play and steep yourself in that so you can act it naturally and do justice to the playwright."

The Times

Submitted by E. Strobes.

Nauseating

Sir,

I know that choosing entries for Pseuds Corner is subjective and all that but I have never seen the point so graphically demonstrated as in your selection for Eye 1002.

The one from Hilary Burden, "Creative Director at beme.com", was the best I've seen for a long time. She (he?) should be hugely humiliated for having come out with such tosh but, given the job title, I fear this would be expecting too much!

By contrast I thought the one from Rory Bremner on Sartre's "Nausee" was an acute and rather clever observation. Is there something wrong with me?

MIKE DODDS,

Via e-mail.

Tol story

Sir,

The terrible phrase "We need to talk" appears at least three times a week in every soap on British television.

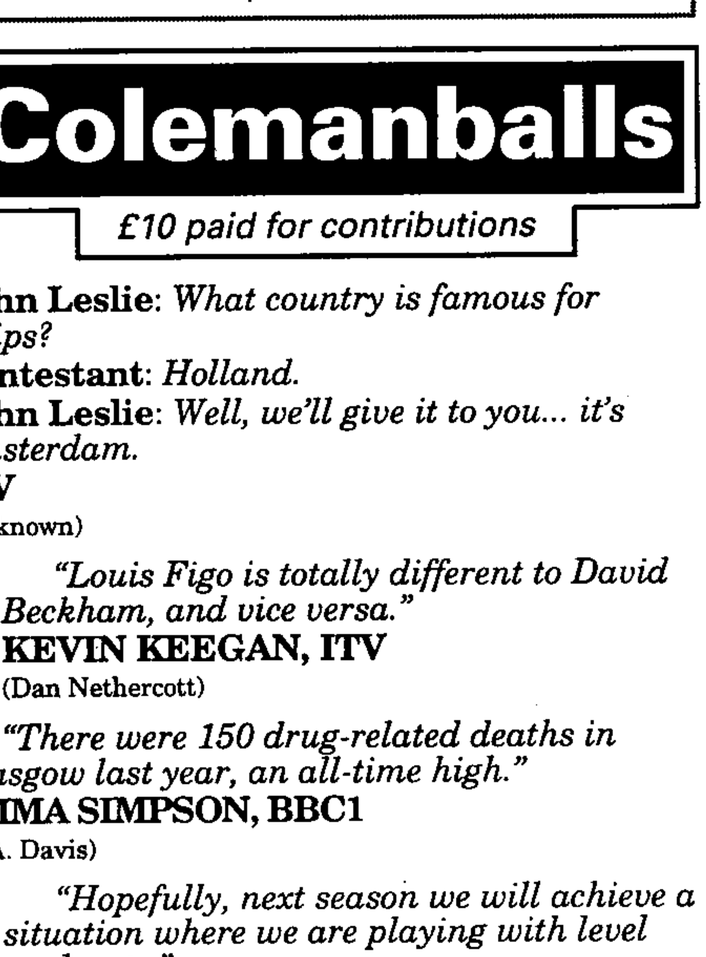
This week it was uttered by Anna Karenina in Leo Tolstoy's classic.

At long last we know who to blame!

Yours,
LAURIE ELLISON,

London SE20.

THE NEW ORTHODOXY



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

John Leslie: *What country is famous for tulips?*
Contestant: *Holland.*
John Leslie: *Well, we'll give it to you... it's Amsterdam.*
ITV
(Unknown)

"Louis Figo is totally different to David Beckham, and vice versa."
KEVIN KEEGAN, ITV
(Dan Nethercott)

"There were 150 drug-related deaths in Glasgow last year, an all-time high."
EMMA SIMPSON, BBC1
(G.A. Davis)

"Hopefully, next season we will achieve a situation where we are playing with level goalposts."
CHRIS ROBERTSON, Radio Scotland
(Morton Fraser)

"We have run a marathon and fallen just short so we need to boost the squad to get us over that final hurdle."
JOHN RUDGE, Evening Sentinel
(Stephen Kennedy)

HOM SAP

Letter from **Freetown**
from Our Own Correspondent

HERE in Sierra Leone we have watched in awe and astonishment what we now call the British invasion. Many hope it will signal our salvation after 10 years of civil war and the 30 more of corruption, decay and decline that made our mineral-rich country so pathetically poor even before the fighting began.

However, some fear it may turn out to be little more than an expensive flag-waving exercise that will only postpone our misery for another day.

Apparently the paras were sent in to arrange the evacuation of your nationals. Not that the airport was ever closed, though, or that many people particularly wanted to leave. On the point of collapse, however, were the UN mission and the dodgy peace agreement that our British and American friends had been so keen to force on us last year.

Foday Sankoh, our pot-bellied, bobble-hat wearing rebel leader, is most loudly blamed, accused of being a latter day Genghis Khan ready to wreak havoc when the blue-helmeted forces of civilisation went to demobilise his troops and take back our diamond-rich regions. He's now in what we call protective custody, facing demands that he be put on trial for crimes against humanity.

Can this African Pol Pot really be the same person who shook hands so warmly only a few months ago with Clare Short, your minister for international development, and Peter Hain, your accident prone Africa minister? And was it not the UK and US, anxious to prevent the rebels from seizing power outright but reluctant to spend any money, who forced us to accept a peace deal that granted Sankoh, already tried and convicted by our courts, not only an amnesty but also made him vice-president, an office, bizarrely, he still holds today?

That deal might never have worked. But certainly, it did not help when rich countries, busy with Kosovo, could not find the time or cash to put a proper UN operation in place more quickly, choosing as a short cut to rebadge as supposedly impartial peackeepers contingents of a ramshackle, Nigerian-led west African intervention force that had already been fighting against the rebels for years.

Our real misfortune in Sierra Leone is to suffer not only from the worst rebel movement in the world, but also from one of the most talentlessly inept, ineffectual and corrupt governments in the world. President Kabbah was elected four years ago in a curious process that saw him reward the chief election officer, who had dismissed widespread reports of rigging and fraud, with the plum job of finance minister. What remained of institutions and administration has collapsed, while the void between the elite and our marginalised, socially excluded youth has grown into an unbridgeable chasm.

Of course our young men are really the future of the democracy that the British and UN are here to protect. But for a decade guns have offered our children a route away from the disease, poverty and back-breaking drudgery of a rice farm for a life of power, drugs, adventure and violence. Whatever happens to our diamonds, or the rebel leaders, or the greedy potentates of neighbouring countries like Liberia that have been stirring our troubles, there will be no real peace until our lost generation can be brought back into the fold. But that will require money and imagination from our leaders and friends abroad, of which there have been precious few signs.

With faces as straight as they can muster, British officers say that with the situation now stabilised, a training and re-equipment programme should allow our army, which, let's not forget, launched three coups in the past eight years, to take the fight to the rebels. That anyone could really put such faith in the motley collection of hooligans, weirdos and children that make up the various, vaguely loyalist groups, sometimes no better than the rebels, and, indeed, in some cases, working with the rebels, is a thought that frankly terrifies us.

Everyone is grateful for the splendid job your chaps have done. But after a catalogue of botched quick fixes from our former colonial masters, we wonder if things might not have been easier all round if you in Britain could just make up your mind about what you really want to achieve here and how you intend to do it. Because our problems in Sierra Leone will not disappear, as they shall from your newspaper headlines, when the last para and marine leave.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "Stench is a proud tradition in the Smrdí family," Honza Smrdí told reporters in Prague after winning the Dávivý jezev ík (Gagging Dachshund) award for outstanding personal odour. "I stink. My father stinks. My grandfather stinks. My great-grandfather stinks, but not like he used to. Nowadays, great-grandpa just smells like dirt. In the old days, it was all there. He was known as 'Pus and piss boy'."

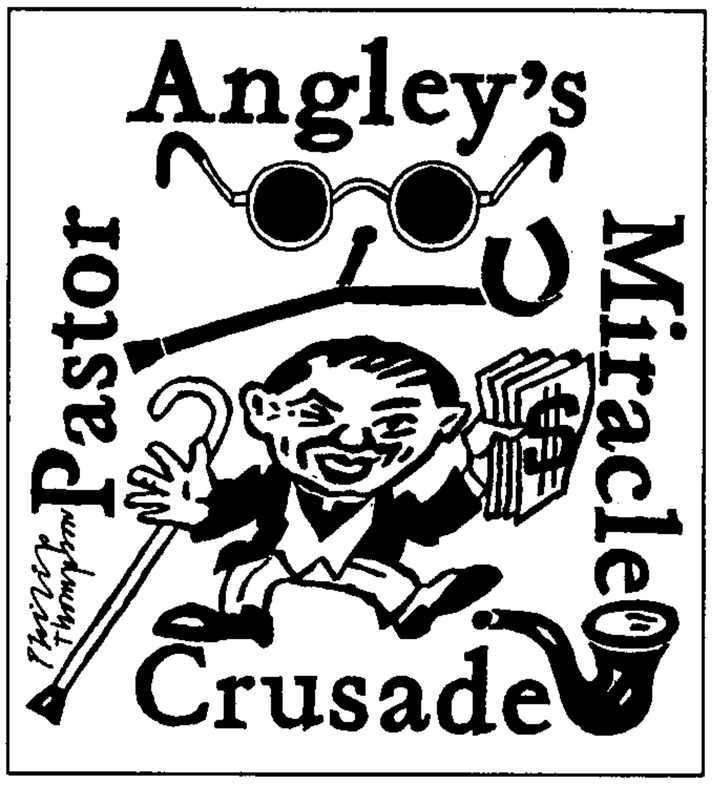
Smrdí had triumphed in the 40-to-55-year-old male category at the awards (held annually in the Czech capital), which also gave trophies to the foulest-smelling men and women in four other age groups. "Smelly men commonly empty tram or metro cars, but I won because in January, in front of witnesses, I managed to force all passengers to vacate the C-line of the metro, using body odour alone. I'm not divulging my secrets, but I will tell you that, in the month leading up to my attempt, I followed a strict diet of garlic, beer, and a local cheese known as 'the devil's farts.' I also shunned water, took four ashtray baths each day, and of course I didn't change my clothes. In the winter, your odour really gains momentum right after Christmas time. That's because you're holding it all in your clothes and the brown paper and lard which I put on as underwear in October is just starting to fester. But as soon as the warmer weather comes and you start to take off those layers, you lose a lot of aroma."

During the opening ceremony, Ji í Husák (representing the event's organisers) had spoken movingly of this longstanding Czech tradition. "We have a long history of offensive odours in Bohemia. Throughout the centuries, other nations have tried to subjugate us, but we've always proven stronger in the end. However, the advent of Western consumerism has added a new foreign note to the fragrance, and we can now stink like Americans if we want to. Before 1989, it was impossible for me to stink as though I had consumed too much nutritionless, processed fast-food and tried to cover it up with cheap aftershave. But now McDonald's is here, and I can smell just as bad as a man from Cleveland if I want to." *(The Prague Post, 19-25/4/00. Spotter: Philip Blair)*

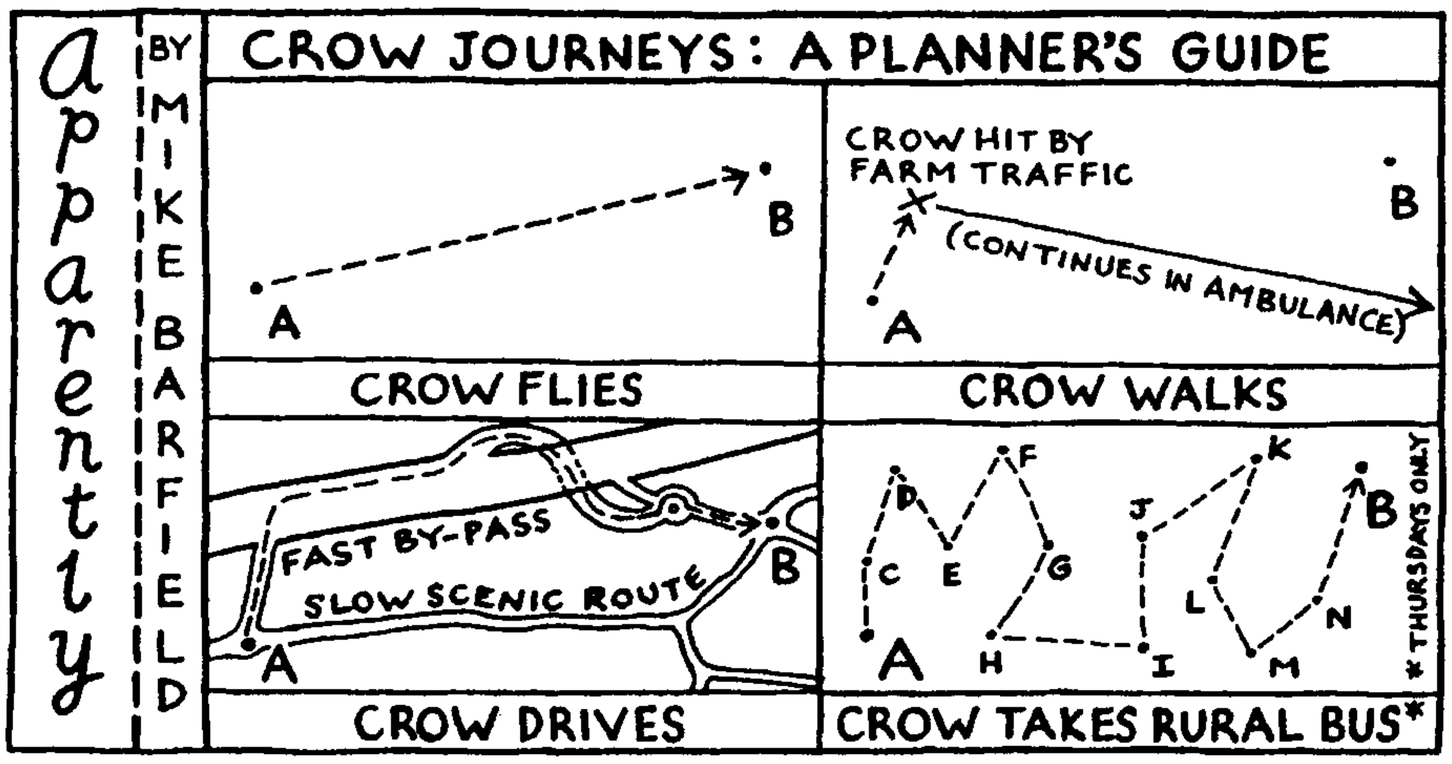
● *"When we heard that Pastor Ernest Angley was coming all the way from America to Botswana to perform miracles, we were all overjoyed," Joseph Difele told reporters in Gaborone. "Before the four-day crusade began, his operatives were selling tickets on every street corner, and there were posters everywhere saying 'Deaf hear! Blind see! Lame walk!' But in the end, the only thing that walked was our money."*

Difele (the Principal of the Ramotswa Centre for Deaf Children) was just one of the thousands of Botswanan believers who had paid to attend Pastor Angley's Miracle Crusade. "When I attended the first rally, I was amazed. About ten deaf, blind, and lame people went up on stage to meet the pastor, and after he laid hands on them, they were cured instantly. Everyone cheered, because these were undoubtedly miracles. So next night, I gave $50 from the Centre's funds to the pastor, so that five of our children could go up on stage to be cured. But when he laid hands on them, nothing happened. Nothing at all. We were very disappointed.

"It was only on the third night that my wife pointed out to me that the pastor had been curing the same ten people every night. At first I didn't believe her, but my suspicions slowly grew, and before the final rally began,

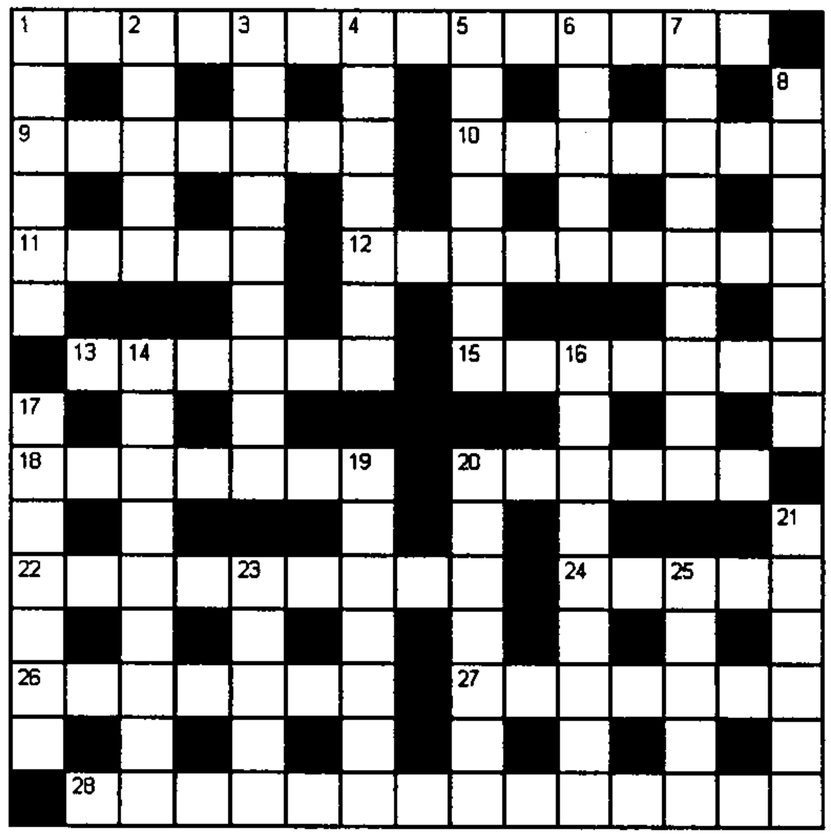


I crept backstage and finally understood the truth. Pastor Angley does not heal the sick. He brings a troupe of actors with him to his crusades. I saw them there, drinking and smoking, laughing and joking, and walking about normally. But then, during the rally, they all appeared on stage with white sticks and crutches, ready to be cured again. I am disgusted. Does Pastor Angley take us for a bunch of fools?" (The Botswana Guardian, 31/3/00. Spotter: Peggy L Henderson)



EYE CROSSWORD 158

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Pub pickings a big disappointment for many Labour politicians recently (5,9)
9 Bill getting screwed – bloody loutish (3-4)
10 Glum guy's scruffy and a terrible kisser (4,3)
11 Flipping have sex with Silver – get pants off! (5)
12 A favoured NHS client? As a bed-occupier, probably not! (2-7)
13 Somehow gets balls stuck inside butt (6)
15 Teletubbie surrounded by nipples and drink containers (7)
18 Auntie Beth rudely hogs the buzzer (3,4)
20 Carrots give Brown one form of BSE (6)
22 Non-believers are getting church in plastic construction (9)
24 Group of Pacific islands in Washington gaffe (5)
26 Airline in Idaho upset prophet (7)
27 Revolting peasant with rather common transport sums up life north of here to some capital-dwellers? (7)
28 Republican party leader and NI Secretary, ditching Loyalists' leader – boy! getting buzz from party political shenanigans (14)

DOWN

1 In the past they've ousted tenants – for a Scottish equivalent of a cricket ground? (6)
2 Star briefly rises in Wycomb election (5)
3 His organ keeps many entertained – God, what a small specimen! (4,5)
4 Technophobe did cartwheels inside instrument (7)
5 Delirious etc. about arse of highly fanciable type (7)
6 A rock in the main, kinky Les is into sex (5)
7 Piss yourself (6,3)
8 Without vitality, piss-poor *Times* shows undue self-regard (7)
14 Neat, these bent politicians gathered abroad (3,6)
16 Upset at Tories stifling Left's man of ideas (9)
17 The sound of a sudden involuntary ejaculation can be – is – a hoot (7)
19 "Victoria's mate to live with drunken hack, *Mirror*'s chief" (7)
20 Prime Minister, not much up top, needs a victory (7)
21 Pet the area between waist and knees, follow? (3-3)
23 Judge, irksome type (5)
25 One bitch on the up as a super-model (5)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 9.6.00. Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 157

Winner: JOHN PUGH

ACROSS: 1 Father-to-be 6 Stab 10 A-levels 11 Rear end 12 Heart 13 Enactment 14 Ulysses 16 Awaited 18 Bonkers 21 Sods off 23 Mussolini 24 Basic 25 Plaudit 26 Timpani 27 Peer 28 Anne Boleyn.

DOWN: 1 Flash bulb 2 Therapy 3 Erect 4 Tossers 5/9 Barbara Cartland 7 The Left 8 Bidet 9 (see 5) 15 Steroids 17 Defection 19 Nastase 20 Smitten 21 Spittle 22 On stage 23 Mop up 24 Bimbo.

ST CAKES HEAD LASHES OXBRIDGE

by Our Education Correspondent **Lynda Chalk**

TOP INDEPENDENT school head Mr R.G.J. Kipling of St Cakes School For Boys (Motto: "Exceedingly High Fees") hit out today at the Oxbridge admissions system which denies opportunities to "thick boys".

Kipling singled out the case of one of his high-paying *(Surely "flying"? Ed.)* pupils Crispin St John de Plankke who with one E grade "A" Level in Classical Civilisation was told "not even to try" for the prestigious Nuclear Physics course at Balliol College Oxford.

"The lad has got it all going for him," said Kipling. "He's a bloody nice bloke, he is in the school First XV and his father is a friend of mine. Yet they turned him down. There must be something wrong with a country that discriminates against its young people solely on the grounds of intelligence."

A-LEVEL PLAYING FIELDS

Yet within days of his rebuff by Balliol, de Plankke was offered a place on the Dome's training course learning to stack chairs in the Education Zone.

Says Kipling, "It has taken a foreigner, Mr P.Y. Gerbeau, to recognise the potential of a British youngster whilst the Oxbridge dons in their ivory towers spend their days drinking port and talking to each other in Latin."

P.Y. Gerbeau is 39.

KNACKER TRIUMPHANT AS DANDO KILLER HELD

by Our Crime Staff **Phil Prisons**

A DELIGHTED Inspector Knacker of the 500-strong Dando Squad was "over the moon" yesterday that at last the killer of TV's Jill Dando is behind bars.

"All that we have left to do now," said Knacker, "is find some evidence, link it to the killer and present the case to a jury."

He continued, "It would be quite wrong for me to say anything at this stage of the proceedings except that he did it and this is his name and address."

EDITOR OBSESSED BY DANDO

by Our Media Staff **Phil Paper**

***A LONE* editor living in Wapping, only six miles away from the scene of the murder, was said to be "obsessed" by *Crimewatch* presenter Jill Dando.**

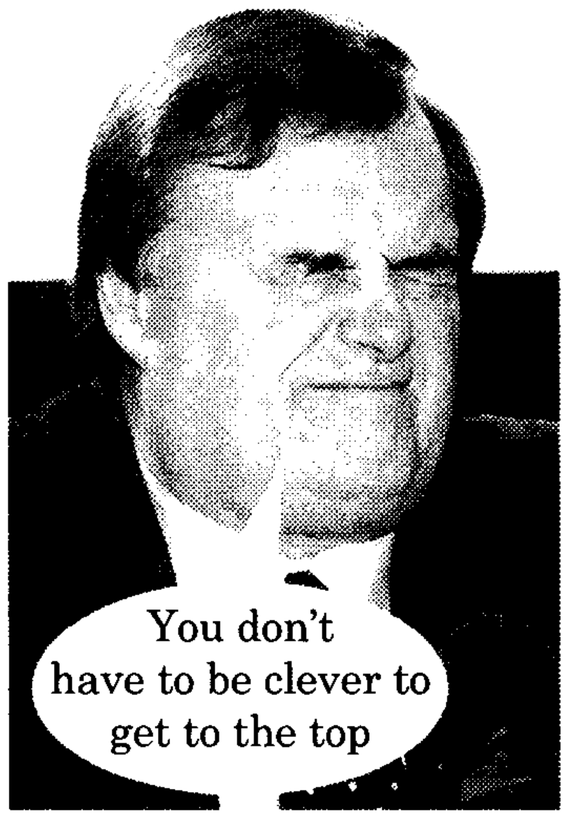
Police found pictures of Dando plastered all over his newspaper and he wrote endless fantasy articles about her death.

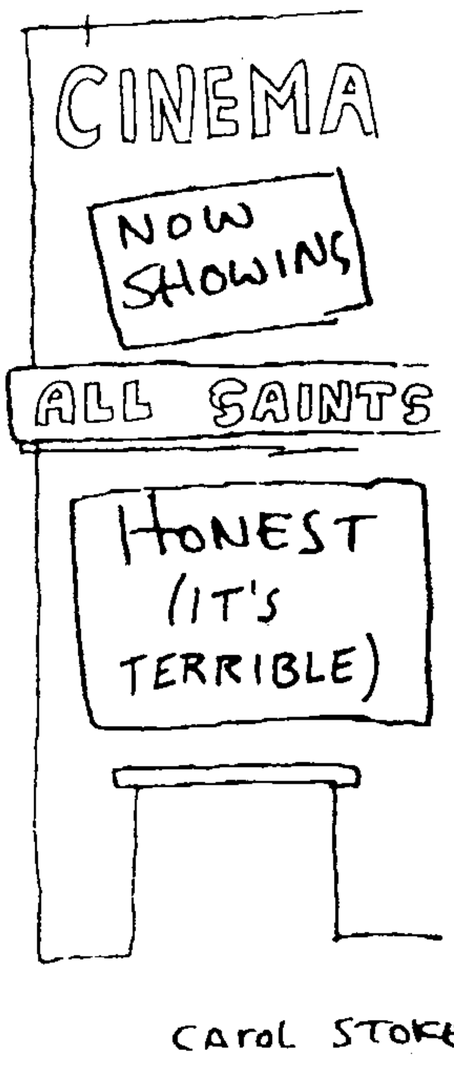
Said one friend of the editor, "He is a bit of a nutter and did the same thing with Princess Diana and Freddie Mercury.

"We are all glad that he is safely behind his desk."

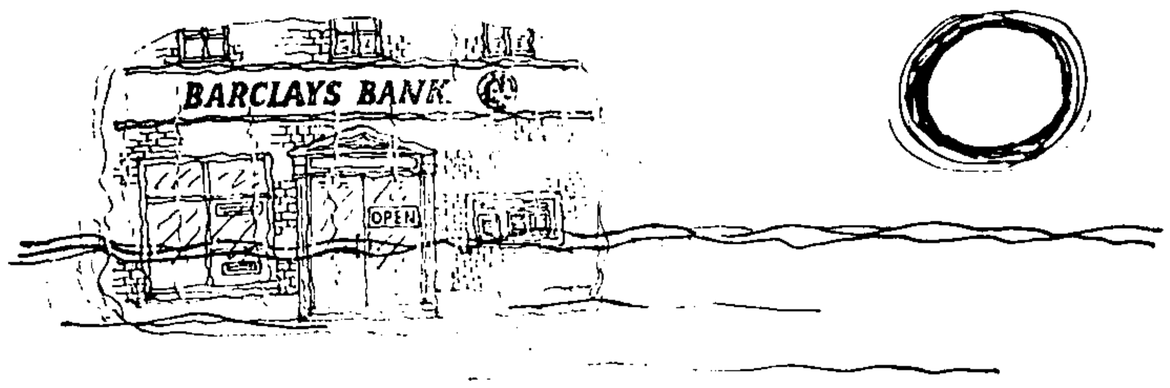
David Yelland is guilty until proved innocent.

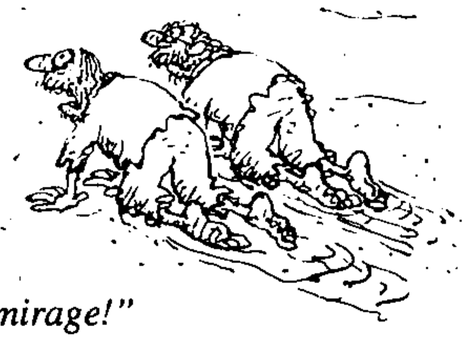
PRESCOTT JOINS DEBATE





CAROL STOKES





MCLACHLAN

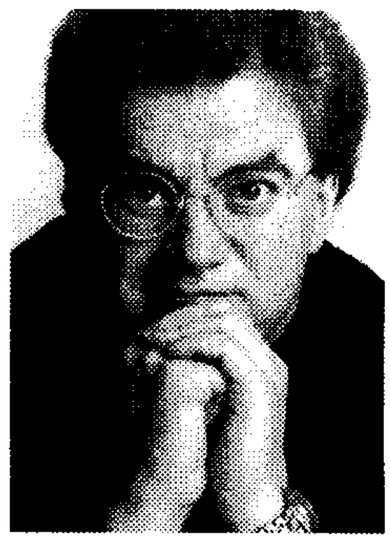
"Now, that's *what I call a mirage!"*

BBC MUSIC LIVE – 'A TRIUMPH' SAYS BBC

by our BBC Staff **Phil Quotas**

OVER TEN million hours of live music with an audience of an estimated 75 people *(Surely vice versa? Ed.)* has finally drawn to a close, allowing the BBC to claim that it is firmly committed to Music whilst ignoring it the rest of the year.

Including live recorded performances in venues all over Britain such as Pizza Express, Maidstone, The Octagon, Neasden and The Old Lighthouse, Romsey, Music Live delighted listeners with events such as The World's Longest Ever Hum, in which professional hummers from Fiji to Pittsburgh hummed the same note (E Flat) continuously for two days, and a marathon Five Day Drumfest from world-famous drumming ensemble, Uttar Rubbesh and *(cont. 94 KHz)*

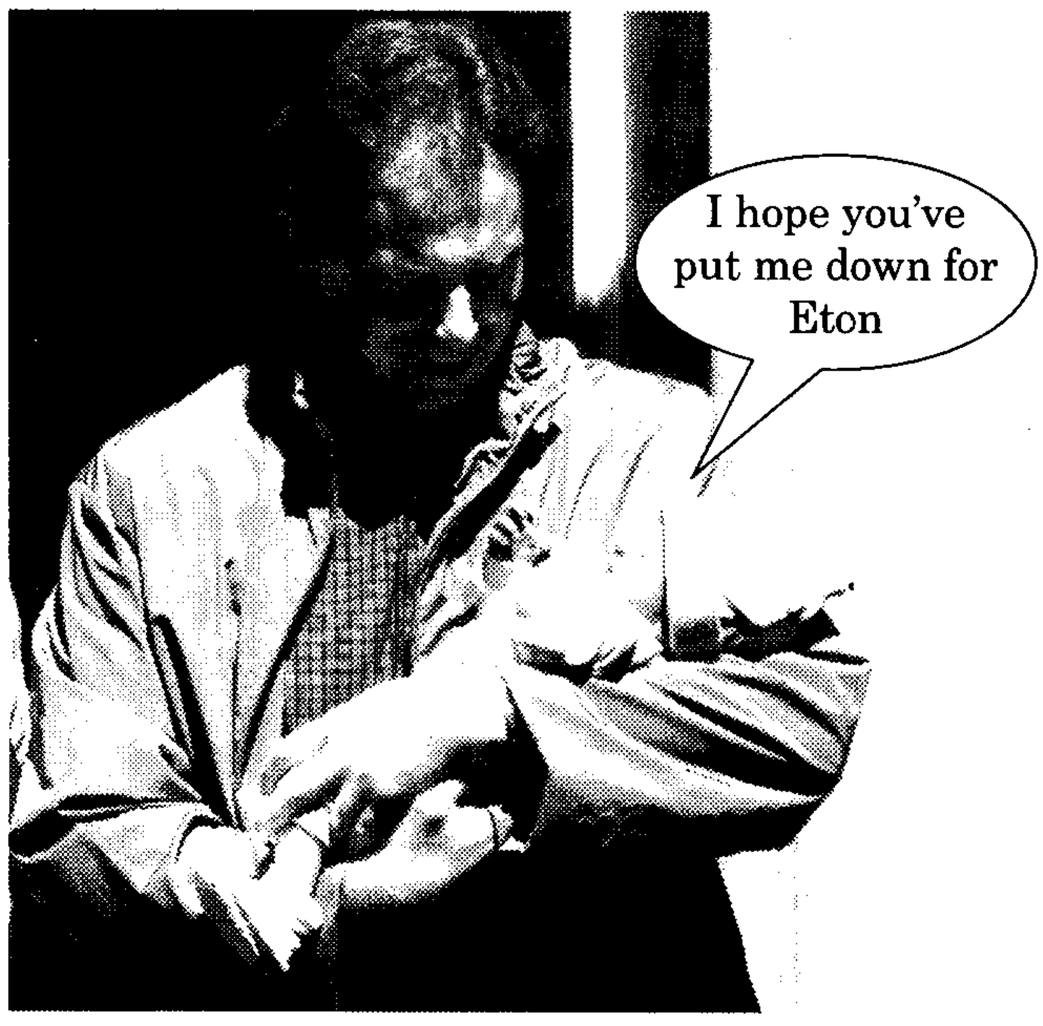


Pianist Hans Klanger plays the complete works of the little-known Bulgarian serialist Vlomf Plomf from the top deck of the No. 175 bus

LATE NEWS

Young Musician of the Year scheduled in middle of night "to stop people watching" – another success for BBC.

EDUCATION LATEST



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

A Special Message From The Vicar

A big "hi" from your weary, but ever so happy vicar!

And a "hi" from little Leo too, who's looking forward to meeting you all!

And a big, big "thank you" from the amazing Cherie, for all the thousands of lovely cards and flowers that you've sent me since our Great News!

What can I say? Leo is a great little kid! Just gorgeous! And, as I told you before, I'll be taking a few days off to look after him and catch up on my sleep!

So, it's over now to John, our Parish No. 2, whom I've asked to look after the shop (or should I say "ship", in John's case?) in my absence.

Missing you already! Tony

To Remember In Your Prayers

● Gordon Brown who has made a bit of a fool of himself by talking nonsense about St Albion's Comprehensive School. Let us pray that in future he does a bit of homework before opening his mouth! Perhaps he is in need of a long holiday – though without any family commitments (not even a girlfriend!) it is probably a bit hard to justify!

T.B.

Millennium Tent

A Special Message From Our Millennium Tent Organiser, Monsieur P-Y Gerbil

Mes Amis de St Albion!

Un grand merci à Monsieur Falconer (et naturellement aussi le Vicar!) pour le cheque enorme (£28.75p!) pour la continuation de la Tente Millenaire pour un autre week!

Quand le cheque arrived, comme je said à Madame Gerbil, "Vraiement, this is one amazing day!" Et surement, c'est une vote de confidence dans mes abilités to make la Tente an even plus grand success.

Indeed, je peux annoncer nous avons des new targets. From aujourd'hui nous avons decidés que three or four personnes visitant la tente chaque jour will be counted as "meeting le target". Et voilà, nous sommes meeting our nouveau target already! P-Y Gerbil

PS. Au revoir à M. Ayling, et un big thank you pour all vous avez fait to make la Tente le grand success! Et bienvenu M. Quarmby. Comme ils disent dans votre country, "Crazy name, crazy guy," n'est-ce pas?

FROM THE WORKING MEN'S CLUB

May I be the first to congratulate Tony and Cherie on their happy event?

But let's not get things out of proportion, shall we?

It's only a baby after all. And a lot of us have had a few of those in our time without making a great song and dance about it, and calling in the local paper!

Tony decided to be in at the birth, which of course is entirely his decision.

But some of the older parishioners might wonder – and who can blame them – whether it wouldn't have been a damn sight more useful if Tony had stayed back at the vicarage to get on with the work he's paid to do, rather than poncing about in a denim shirt looking like a cross between a male model and a tea-boy, as some unkind person might well have said!

I don't want to disparagise Tony's efforts to be modern and with it.

But if I'd lain down full length on the carpet posing with any of my kids, I think Pauline might have said "Get up, you daft booger" *(pardon my French!)*, "or everyone'11 think you're a poof" *(pardon my Italian!)*.

Each to his own, is what it says in the Good Book, and it would be a dull world indeed if we were all as sensible as me!

So, let's not begrudgerate the Vicar his little moment of glory, and I'm sure we're all very sympathetic with Cherie having to put up with all this crying and bleating (and that's just Tony – no offence, Tone, just having a bit of fun!).

But at least one good thing has come out of all this ridiculous nuss and fonsense, and that's that I've been given a chance to take over again, as I'm always happy to do, and sort out some of the messes that certain people have left behind them!

Cheers!

John

John Prescott

Poem on the Birth of Leo Blair

Welcome, baby, to our world,
Let all the flags be now unfurled,
And as you gasp the sweet May air
We all salute you Leo Blair.

I'd like to have penned a second verse,
And one that wouldn't have been much worse,
But as you know, I'm fantastically busy,
Doing important jobs that would make anyone else feel dizzy.

Lord Melvyn of Barg, Southbank House
PS. I enclose a self-billing invoice for the sum of £10,000.

ALMS-GIVING

Mr Cook Writes:

We are holding a jumble sale in the Parish Hall on Bank Holiday Monday to raise funds to provide the children of Sierra Leone with much needed guns:

£5 will buy a box of ammunition
£10 will buy a 2nd-hand armalite rifle
£50 will buy a machine gun.

All jumble welcome (except copies of my ex-wife Margaret's book which no one wants to buy because it is not of interest at all). R. Cook

"Flat fish? I'm sure I can find you some"

WORLD PEACE DECLARED

by Our UN Staff **C.N.D. March**

THE world's nuclear powers decided yesterday to scrap all nuclear weapons and to renounce their use for ever.

As church bells rang out to greet the news, and old age pensioners danced openly in the streets with teenagers, the UN Security Council issued a "clarification" of its earlier announcement.

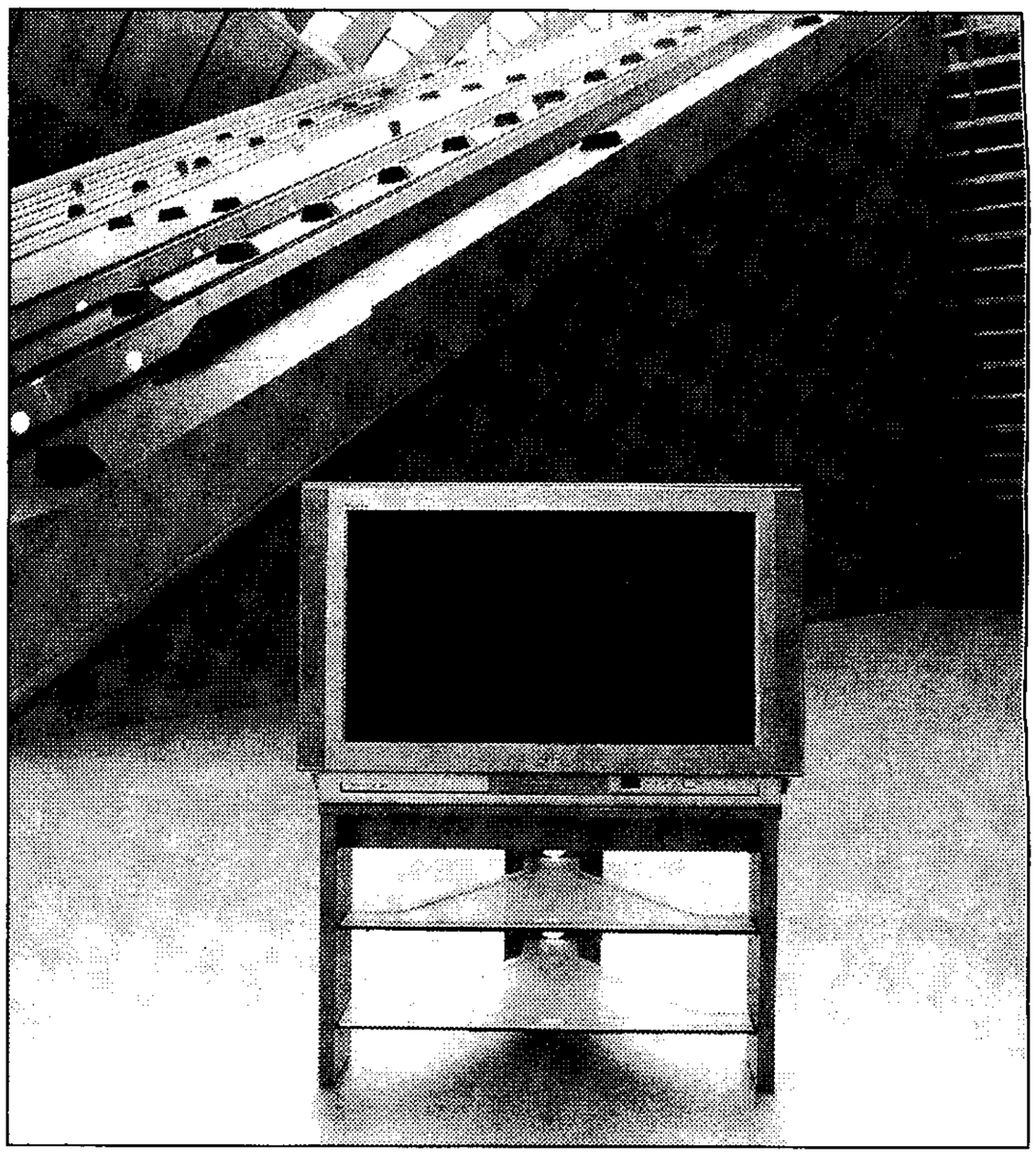
INSTANT KOFI ANNAN

"When we agreed" this ran "to scrap all nuclear weapons, we did not of course mean that this would happen tomorrow.

"Before peace can break out certain conditions must be met. Firstly, all countries who have not signed the agreement must agree to sign it – ie, India, Pakistan, Israel, Iraq, Iran, the United States of America, Libya etc.

"Secondly, there must be a cooling off period of 100 years so that everyone can think very carefully about this one.

"Thirdly, any country which does not agree with the ban is liable to be bombed into submission with nuclear warheads of the type no longer needed thanks to the outbreak of World Peace."



Eye Garden Wins Top Prize At Chelsea

by Our Gardening Staff **Phil Pot**

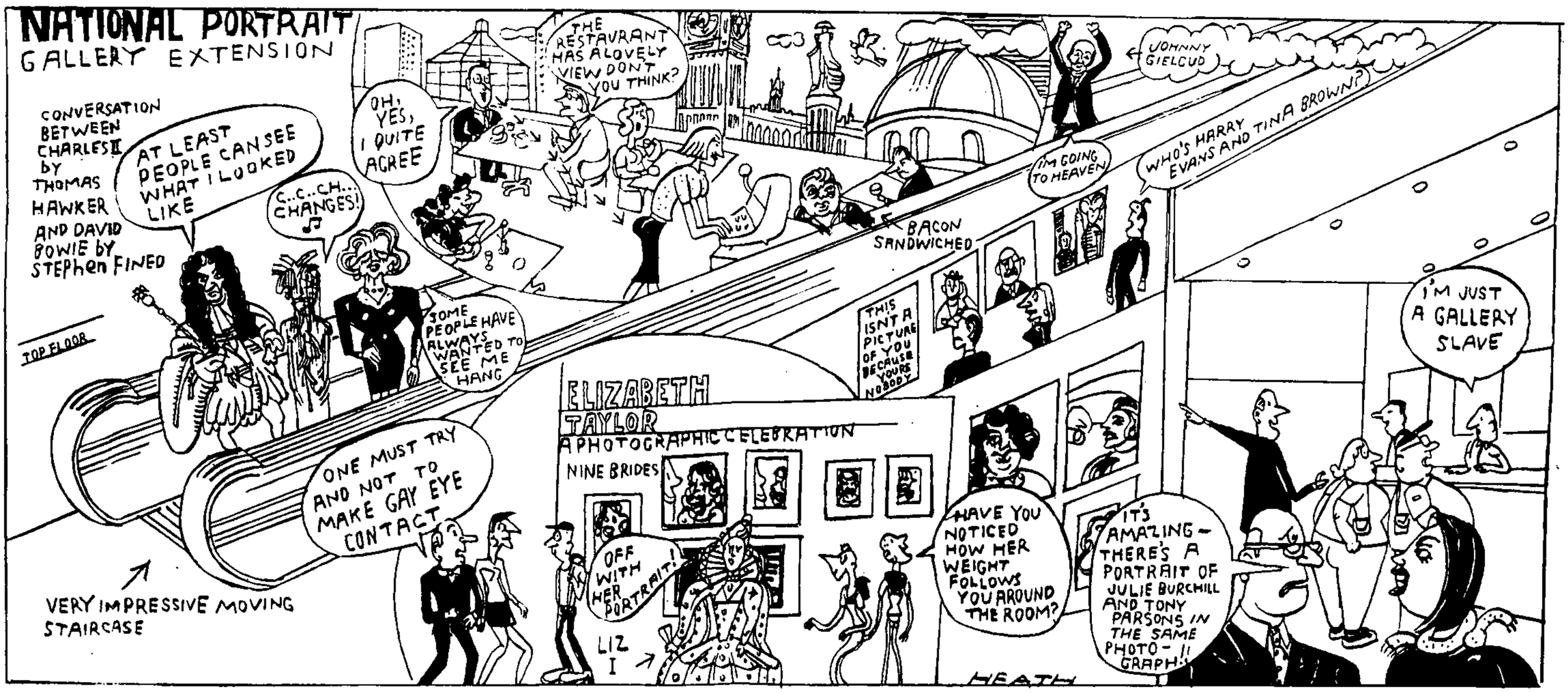
THE MINIMALIST garden created for Private Eye by top landscape artist Robin Thistleton de Vere Bauhaus was unanimously voted winner of the Gold Medal at this year's Chelsea Flower Show.

In the opinion of the judges, the garden was "a stunning example of creating a really modern space using contemporary garden materials such as steel and aluminium".

Coup de Grass

The most original idea of all, they agreed, was Bauhaus' placing of a giant video screen in the centre of his horticultural masterpiece on which visitors could watch a continuous tape of Charlie Dimmock.

HEATH'S PRIVATE VIEW


NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY EXTENSION
CONVERSATION BETWEEN CHARLES II BY THOMAS HAWKER AND DAVID BOWIE BY STEPHEN FINED
AT LEAST PEOPLE CAN SEE WHAT I LOOKED LIKE
C..C..CH... CHANGES!
OH, YES, I QUITE AGREE
THE RESTAVRANT HAS A LOVELY VIEW DON'T YOU THINK?
JOHNNY GIELGUD
I'M GOING TO HEAVEN
WHO'S HARRY EVANS AND TINA BROWN?
BACON SANDWICHED
TOP FLOOR
SOME PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE ME HANG
THIS ISN'T A PICTURE OF YOU BECAUSE YOURE NOBODY
I'M JUST A GALLERY SLAVE
ELIZABETH TAYLOR
A PHOTOGRAPHIC CELEBRATION
NINE BRIDES
ONE MUST TRY AND NOT TO MAKE GAY EYE CONTACT
OFF WITH HER PORTRAIT!
LIZ I
HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW HER WEIGHT FOLLOWS YOU AROUND THE ROOM?
IT'S AMAZING - THERE'S A PORTRAIT OF JULIE BURCHILL AND TONY PARSONS IN THE SAME PHOTO-!! GRAPH!
VERY IMPRESSIVE MOVING STAIRCASE
HEATH

THE BOOK OF BARAK

Chapter 94

1. And lo, it came to pass in those days that the children of Israel were led by Bar-ak, so-called because he dwelt in former times in Bar-aks.
2. Dost thou get it?
3. For Bar-ak was an warrior, and in his youth had smitten the Arab-ites, the Araf-ites, the Syrian-ites, the Hezboll-ites and all the other -ites which formerly lived in the land of Is-rael.
4. But now in these times the children of Is-rael had grown weary of the smiting. For in the land of Le-ban-on, their sons had been smitten back.
5. Which was not the idea at all.
6. And there was wailing and gnashing of teeth.
7. And the soldiers that were encamped in Le-ban-on said unto another, "Stuffeth this for an game of soldiers. Which is to say, we wish to return to our homeland, even as the bee returneth to the honeycomb upon the hills of Gil-ead."
8. And Bar-ak hearkeneth unto their cry, saying unto them, "Rejoice, O sons of Is-rael. For I say unto you, yea, the time of smiting is over. The leopard shall lie down with the porpentine, and the goat shall give suck to the cockatrice."
9. And the children of Is-rael said unto him, "What art thou talking about, Bar-ak?"
10. And he said unto them, "We have won a great victory. We are going to surrender."
11. Then the children of Is-rael rose up, and cast away their weapons of war, and began to run very fast, even unto their homes in the land of Is-rael.
12. And so it came to pass that the days of smiting were at an end.
13. And the Hezboll-ites rejoiced exceedingly, as they said amongst themselves, "Lo, here is an mighty pile of weapons of war which the children of Is-rael have kindly left behind."
14. "Let us therefore taken them unto ourselves and make ready for a bit of smiting in our turn."

(Continued for ever and ever)

Private Eye is proud to offer a unique souvenir of a truly historic event

THE GNOME BABYBLAIR BOTTLE

Fashioned from Royal Worcester-style Staffordshire plastic, this incredible heritage item is designed by world-famous baby-bottle designer Sir Ralph Stodswell A.R.C.B.B.D. (Associate of the Royal College of Baby Bottle Designers).

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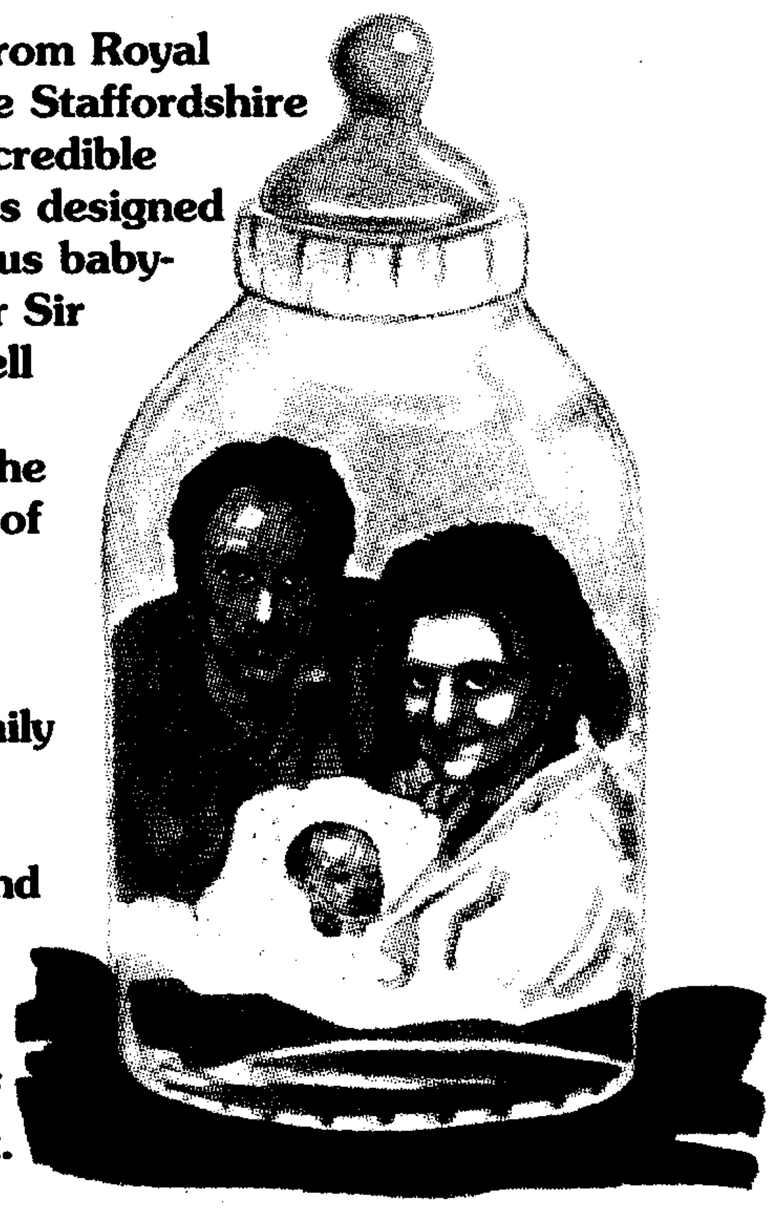

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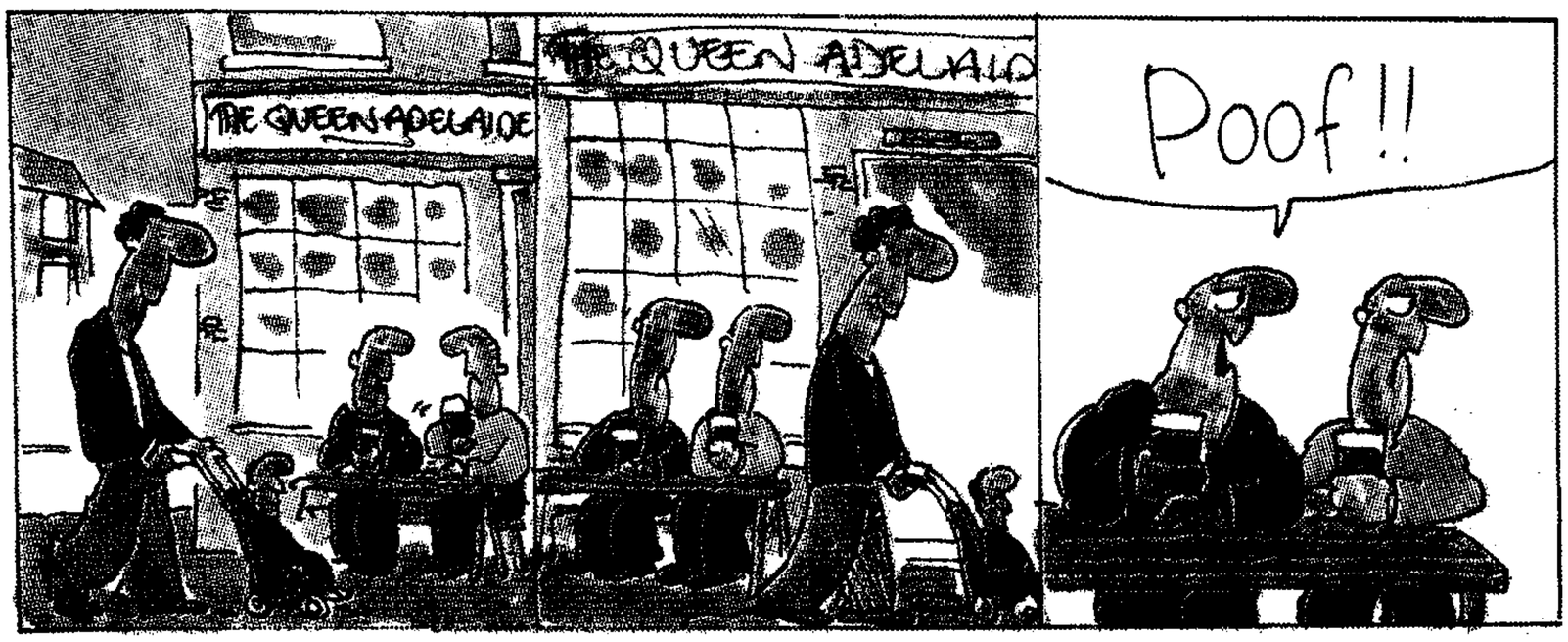
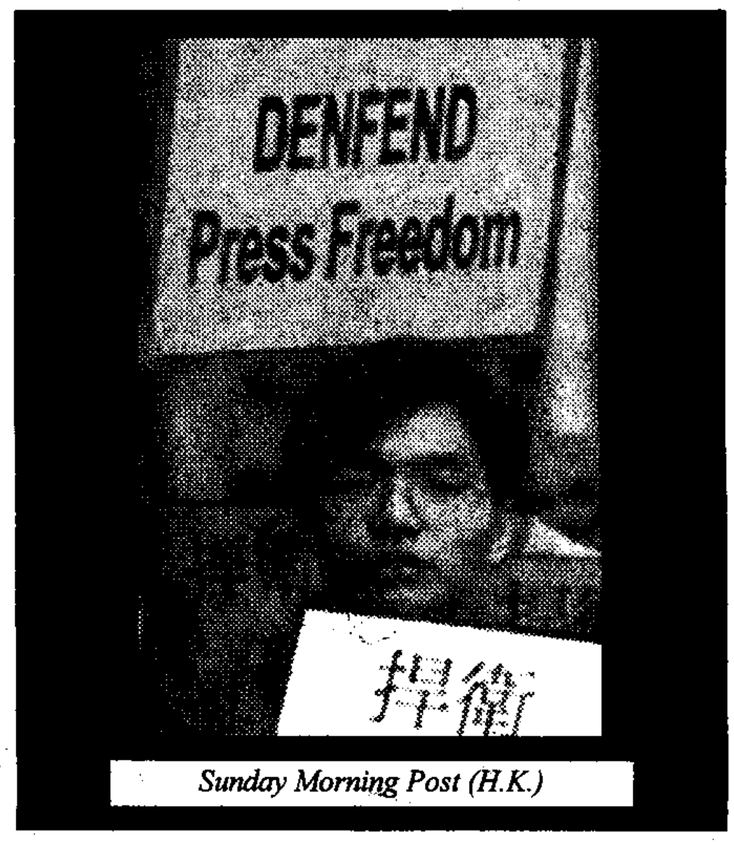
HUSBAND





Sunday Morning Post (H.K.)

EXCLUSIVE TO ALL NEWSPAPERS

HEL-LEO!!!

by Our Entire Staff

NOT SINCE the year 0 A.D. has the birth of a baby so captured the imagination of the entire world!

For a few magical hours, the human race was able to put all its divisions on one side, to forget all its cares and its woes, the starving millions in Africa, the dead bodies in the killing fields of far-away Chechnya, and instead raise a glass of good cheer to the miracle of new life – the cutest tot on Planet Earth. *(Keep going, this is brilliant! Ed.)*

And in this sacred moment, which had the power to transform us all, a tough, hardened politician became a doting Dad.

There was scarcely a dry eye in the whole of Britain, as millions of readers forgot their Frosties and their Golden Grahams to gaze in silent homage at Sir Paul McCartney's daughter's pictures of little, laughing Leo, as he took his first shy peek at the baffling world of 2000 A.D.

What will he make of it, the world of the Internet, the Millennium Dome and Tate Modern?

And what will he think of us, his fellow travellers on a global voyage into the unknown, as we struggle to fill up hundreds of pages with this mind-numbing drivel?

ON OTHER PAGES

● **What Happens When A Baby Is Born?** A Doctor states the obvious. **2**

● **What Cherie Must Be Feeling** – A psychiatrist takes the money **3**

● **To Breast Feed Or Not To Breast Feed?** Hundreds of hackettes debate the most burning issue of our age **4**

● **What Happened When I Had My Baby** – Hundreds more hackettes bore us to death with their childbirth experiences **5**

● **Why I Don't Want A Baby** – Deirdre Spart explains why she refuses to add to the population explosion **6**

● **Is Leo A Leo?** Asks our top astrologer Mystic Mogg **7**

● **Will Leo Support Man U?** by Our Sports Editor Sally Jockstrap **8**

● **Will Baby Blair Win The Next Election?** by Our Political Staff Charles Moore-Babyplease **9**

● **How Sir Paul's Girl Landed The Photo-Scoop of the Millennium 10**

● **How We Put Our World-Beating Baby Leo Supplement Together** – a behind-the-scenes look at the birth of a great news feature **11**

PLUS thousands of pictures of a baby **11-94**

If you would like to see more pictures of Baby Leo just click onto our special website — www.gorgeousbaby.co.uk

STOP PRESS

ENGLAND TRIUMPH IN TEST

Final score: England 571-1 dec. Rumbabwe 14 and 7-9

Play stopped when ground was occupied by war veterans of Rumbabwe Patriotic Liberation Front wielding machetes and demanding the right to plant genetically-modified mealie-mealie on the square.

WHO WILL BE BABY LEO'S GOD-PARENTS?

You decide on who should give Tony's tot spiritual & moral guidance in the years to come

Godfathers

Ant and Dec
Alain de Botton
Martin McGuinness
Martin Clunes
Bob Ayling
Vladimir Putin
Jamie Oliver
The Very Reverend Richard Chartres, Bishop of London

Godmothers

Britney Spears
Dr Germaine Greer
Sister Wendy
All Saints
Martha Lane Fox
A.S. Byatt
Joanna Lumley
Rabbi Julia Neuberger

An Eye Phone Line Special
0898 742346757

ROY of the ROVERS
THAT'S IT ROY! THE FOOTBALL SEASON IS OVER!
SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
PLAY FOOTBALL!
THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER BUT IT ISN'T!
FINANCIAL GOAL!
COOPER

"Wrong orgy, mate. This is destruction!"

The Daily Hurleygraph

Friday, June 2, 2000

Yes, It's Over! Showbiz Couple To Split

By Our Entire Staff Hugh Grant-Montgomery Massingberd

THE LONG-running love affair between the glamorous actress and the floppy-haired public schoolboy is finally over.

For 11 years the beautiful Liz Hurley and the diffident Charles Moore were inseparable.

She was always to be seen on his front page and wherever Liz went Charles would be there faithfully reporting her every deed.

Their relationship even survived Charles's infidelity when he was caught with an older woman (the "Divine" Mrs Thatcher) as his lead story. The disgrace of his now infamous "sucking up" to this notorious woman shocked Liz deeply but somehow she forgave him and soon she moved back into his newspages, sucking a dummy, wearing a dress or putting on a pair of sunglasses.

But then suddenly this week came the devastating announcement – Liz was no longer an item. Fans could not believe that Charles had dumped Liz from the front page after only one day, and had been seen flirting with the idea of putting some news in his paper.

Daily Telegrant

A spokesman for the couple said there was no third party involved – although friends claim privately that the dashing Charles and the Conservative Party have recently been getting into bed together.

Charles Moore is the star of *Four Wedding Announcements and an Obituary* and *Notting Much Else.*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Sir Larrold "Larry" Lamb, Editor of the Sun newspaper

So. Farewell then
Sir Larry Lamb,
Inventor of the famous
"Page Three Girl".

"Gorgeous, pouting
Samantha, 19,
Is certainly keen to show off
Her talents."
That was your catchphrase.

"Phew! What a scorcher!"
That was another,
Which you might be
Using again —
Depending on where you
Have gone.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

EYE HEADLINE COMPETITION

'TIRED, EXHAUSTED, WEARY – AND PLEASED IT'S ALL OVER'

Who said this?

A Cherie Blair
B Liz Hurley
C Patsy Kensit
D The Late Barbara Cartland
E Readers of British newspapers having to read all this stuff.

Answer: F The Dome

POLICE are investing the theft of almost £1,000 from The Crown at Ardleigh.

Evening Gazette (Colchester)

Advertisement

Waterstone's Signing Session

Stella Rimington will be here on Friday at 12.00 am to sign copies of the Official Secrets Act.

The top author will read extracts from her contract, including the famous section 4(b) where she swore not to reveal any details of her employment in the service of British Intelligence, particularly in the printed media.

She will then answer questions on "How dare you spill the beans, you old hypocrite, when you have tried to gag every other former employee with threats of imprisonment?"

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

I see those two Chinese artists pissed in Duchamp's Urinal.
After stripping off and jumping on Tracey's Bed at last year's Turner.
You don't think they'll disrupt my next show?
I'll ring and ask them.
Thanks. I could use the publicity.

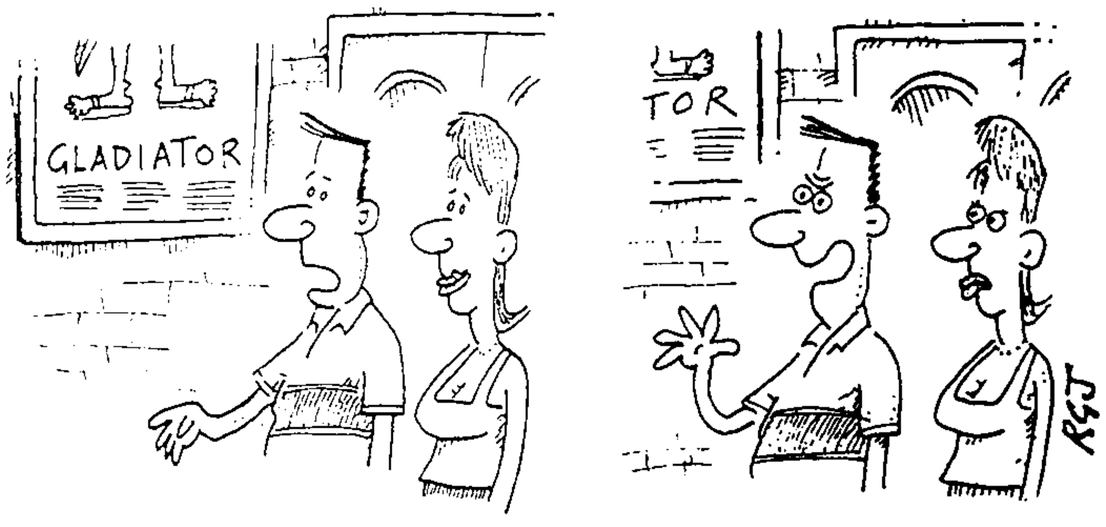
LATE NEWS

BBC Defends Screening 'Birthday Pageant'

AFTER angry condemnation from the general public and large sections of the press the BBC was forced to defend its decision to screen blanket coverage of the Blair Baby's procession from the Chelsea hospital to Number 10.

"This criticism is disgraceful," said a BBC spokesman. "Surely people should remember that this baby has been a figurehead of our nation for almost twenty-four hours."

VOX POP



"The Romans really were disgusting – watching all that gory violence for pleasure"

"I liked the bit where his head comes off and the blood spurts out of his neck"

MORE MONEY TO BE POURED DOWN DRAIN

by Our Millennium Staff **M.T. Dome**

THE WORLD's largest drain, situated in Greenwich and designed by world-famous drain architect Lord Rogers, is to receive a further £29 million boost, in tribute to its inexhaustible capacity for wasting huge sums of public money.

"The Drain is uniquely designed," explained Heritage Secretary Chris Smith, "so that you can you pour any amount of money down it, without any of it ever coming back."

BOTTOMLESS PIT

"We should be proud of the Drain," said leading drain expert Simon Jenkins. "No other country can claim to have wasted anything like this amount of money.

"Our early forecasts of £758 million passing through the drain have actually been exceeded. It looks as though we shall soon have reached the incredible figure of £1 billion. Truly we can be proud of Britain."

STOP PRESS

Drain Champion Honoured

FORMER Times Editor Simon Jenkins is to be ennobled for his services to the Millennium Drain, under the title of Lord Jenkins of Greenwich. Earlier this year Lord Jenkins published a widely-acclaimed book, "The 1000 Best Drains in Britain".

Will Smith at Agincourt

At the Cinema

New Hollywood Releases

U-194

GRIPPING World War II story about how U.S. soldiers cracked the Enigma Code and won the war in the Atlantic with no help from the Royal Navy at all. Stars **Matt Damon** as Lieutenant Brad Hero and **Sir Alec Guinness** as Adolf Hitler.

Charge of the Light Brigade

STIRRING tale of how the U.S. Seventh Cavalry won the Crimean War by charging at the Turkish guns in the so-called Valley of Death. Stars **Bruce Willis** as Captain Chuck Nolan and **Sir John Mills** as the evil Ottoman Emperor, Salaman The Rushdie.

Zulu

EXTRAORDINARY tale of American heroism with **Tom Hanks** as leader of an isolated troop of Green Berets who single-handedly defeat the British Army in Zululand in 1879, thus ridding the world of slavery for ever. Watch out for cameo performance by **Stephen Fry** as the evil Michael Caine.

Henry Vth

WILL SMITH is the wise-cracking American General, Henry Plantagenet The Fifth Junior who, with his "Dirty Dozen" Special Forces archers, single-handedly defeats the evil British Army and liberates France from Anglo-Saxon tyranny, co-starring **Alan Rickman** as the wicked English Dauphin. *(That's enough terrible Hollywood history. Ed.)*

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

Damien's gone too far this time. He copies a kids' toy, calls it Hymn...
... sells it for £1m...
...then settles the legal action by giving money to charity.
I mean, money to charity! How tacky!
Like he was Bruce Forsyth, or somebody...
Yuk!

EVEN LATER NEWS

ITV Unveils New Schedule

ITV today hit back at criticisms from the Independent Television Commission implying that its programmes "were old hat", by announcing a whole raft of new shows it was sure would prove ratings winners.

They include: "It'll be Alright on the Queen Mum's Birthday Night", "Blind Queen Mum's Date", "Queen Mum's Heartbeat" and "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire Like The Queen Mum Is".

"These are the sort of bold, innovative new shows that are bound to capture the imagination of the British viewing public," said a delighted senior ITV... *(cont. p. 94)*

DIARY

SIR DAVID HARE: I most admired Sir John Gielgud for his tireless commitment to the modern theatre.

He would undoubtedly have relished the bleak portrait of post-colonial Britain portrayed in contemporary classics such as my own "Absence of Interest" (1979), "Unpleasant Moments" (1983) and "Plenty Long Enough" (1993).

In one of his most celebrated "Gielgoofs", he came up to me in the foyer of the National Theatre and congratulated me on my play – when in fact, as everyone knew, I had three plays running in repertory!

We shall not see his like again.

MICHAEL WINNER: Sir John Gielgud was quite simply one of the greatest actors who ever had the privilege of working with me.

At the time, I was with my then girlfriend, Jenny Seagrove, who was easy on the eye and a very sexually attractive young lady to boot. I need hardly tell you that the two of us got up to a great deal of hanky-panky!

I had directed over thirty highly successful Hollywood movies, including the classic "Death Wish" series, with my old mate Charlie Bronson. I was in a position to entertain friends in the finest international restaurants.

I lived in a posh 30-bedroom mansion in London's highly-sought-after Holland Park district. I had my own private cinema, en-suite bathrooms in every bedroom, a well-stocked wine-cellar and a personal chef at hand at all hours to conjure up tasty treats at all hours.

And I was well-known, too, as an outstanding public figure in Britain – a man who had gained the respect of the great British public for not being afraid to make his voice heard on issues such as law and order, film censorship and slack service in restaurants.

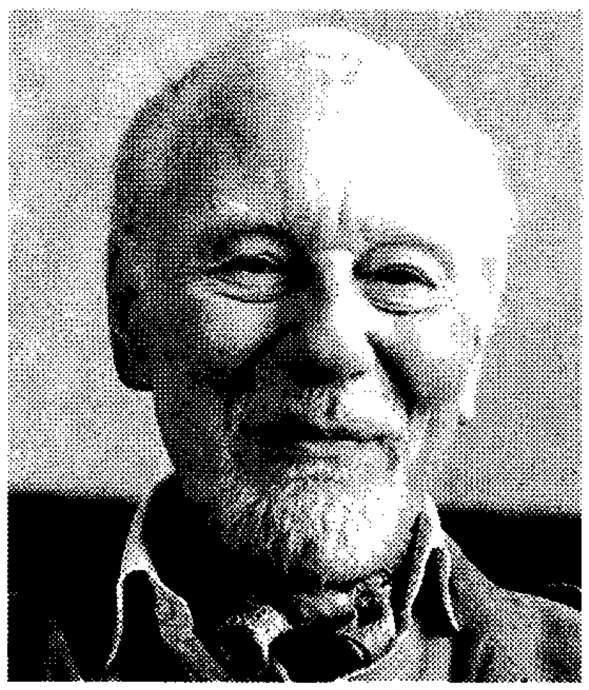
When I clicked my fingers, Prime Ministers would come running.

You might have imagined that Sir John would have been over-awed by the legend that preceded me.

Far from it.

He found me a delight to work with – generous, entertaining and above all blessed with an unexpected humility.

Sadly, his death means he will never again



THE JOHN GIELGUD WHO KNEW ME

get the opportunity to work with me. It is, I suppose you could say, the end of an era.

We shall not see his like again.

LORD ARCHER: I know how bitterly disappointed Sir John was not to be given the part of Sir Reginald Chumley QC in my long-running 1991 stage play, "Guilty as Charged".

But he never let it show.

Because that's the kind of man he was.

The play went on to break all box-office records – and I know that Sir John was simply delighted for me.

Having acted myself – I won the top scholarship to RADA, followed by ten highly successful years performing all the great tragic roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company – I was well-placed to judge what it was that made Johnny quite so great.

In a word – *common decency.*

The man never for one moment expressed bitterness or envy at my achievements. Far from it.

He was among my greatest admirers.

As the Bard himself put it – *we shall not see his like again.*

RICHARD E. GRANT: It's 1992. I'm told I'm going to act with Sir John Gielgud.

I am going to ***act*** with ***Sir John Gielgud***.

SIR!

JOHN!

GIEL-GUUUUUD!!!

WOOOOO-FUCKING-WHEEEE!

The sheer bloody TENSION is almost unBEARable. My memories of seeing Sir John onscreen stretch way back to my childhood. He played YOU KNOW in THINGUMMY – and I'll never forget him as that PERSON in WOTSIT.

FAB-EROONI, BABE!

The day arrives. The director introduces us.

We shake hands. We. Shake. Hands.

And I'll never forget what he says. He says, "Dear boy, I did enjoy that film of yours, Withnail and I."

Canyoubelieveit?

He loved ***me***!

Yeee-HAH!

We shall not see his like again.

CHRIS SMITH, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport: The tragic death of Sir John Gielgud has created a terrific buzz.

In the field of the theatre he was a true professional who will be remembered by many.

He was, if you will, a great British success story – the Damien Hirst of his day.

Though he was sadly unable to take part in great recent British successes like *The Full Monty*, I know he would have welcomed their international success.

The tremendously vibrant, youthful sound of *Oasis*. The extraordinary excitement around the world created by the opening of *Tate Modern*. And the genuine accessibility and sheer cutting-edge relevance of the latest CD by *The Prodigy*.

These are all solid British achievements of which Sir John would have been rightly proud.

So when we remember Sir John Gielgud today, we remember far more than just another actor.

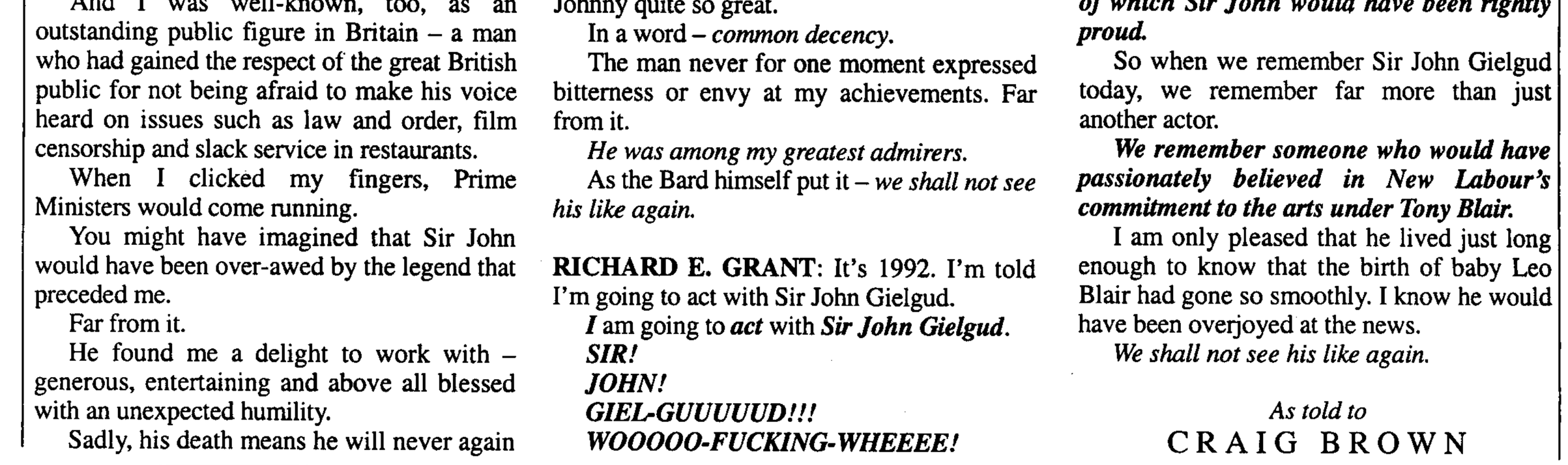
We remember someone who would have passionately believed in New Labour's commitment to the arts under Tony Blair.

I am only pleased that he lived just long enough to know that the birth of baby Leo Blair had gone so smoothly. I know he would have been overjoyed at the news.

We shall not see his like again.

As told to

CRAIG BROWN


"GARY BLOKE TURNED UP FOUR HOURS LATE FOR THE PHOTO SHOOT IN A HIGHLY AGITATED STATE..."
NEWS
"HE SPENT MOST OF THE SESSION SINGING TO HIMSELF, SLURRING HIS WORDS AND PLAYING AN IMAGINARY PIANO"...
NEWS
"SOURCES ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN HIS BIZARRE BEHAVIOUR AS THE AFTER EFFECTS OF A VISIT TO THE DENTIST." PULL THE OTHER ONE, GARY...!
IT'S TRUE, MATE.
NEWS
I'D JUST HAD SOME EXPENSIVE BRIDGE WORK FINISHED AND WENT OUT ON THE LASH TO CELEBRATE.
NEWS

Literary Review

Future schlock

On The Edge: Living With Global Capitalism

Eds: Will Hutton & Anthony Giddens

(Cape, £16.99)

LIKE every branch of commercial activity, the book trade has its crazes: publishing's equivalent of Pokemon or Gameboy. Two flagrant current examples are flowers (tulips, orchids, etc) and novels about sex-obsessed girlie flatsharers. One craze that the average bookshop habitué won't perhaps have fully cottoned to is the unquenchable enthusiasm for "Future Shock" books.

Taking their cue from the title of a work by dear old Alvin Toffler who, as long ago as the 1970s, started writing a string of apocalyptic best-sellers about how *scary* it was all getting out there, these have titles like *Future Wealth* and *Managing Complexity*.

Their themes, whatever the levels of intellectual sophistication and excitability on display, are more or less identical. It's all getting *very complicated*, don't you know? Techno-boffins crawling around in cyberspace, global meltdown apparently just around the corner, knowledge overload, Bill Gates' salary twice the size of many an African state's GDP – what are we going to do?

Some buzzwords in any analysis of this kind are generally "connectivity" (the idea that each part of the New Economy is, in however a tangential way, connected); "the new economy" itself; and of course "globalisation". *On The Edge* has a great deal to say about all three.

Most future shock stuff is permanently pop-eyed in its approach, of course, so it's nice to know that messrs Hutton and Giddens' effort is a highly superior artefact. No catchpenny sensationalism for a former editor of the *Observer* turned CEO of the Industrial Society and the director of the LSE, eh?

Each of the dozen or so contributions brought together in this upmarket essay collection consequently just oozes *gravitas*, none more so than the 50-page introductory "conversation" in which the editors banter away seriously ("Sorry, but you misunderstand me", "You're getting carried away", "You've got too much of a conspiracy theory there") in a manner which is both ineffably stagey and reminiscent of nothing so much as Newman and Baddiel's quarrelling history professors routine.

At least this extended bout of throat-clearing gives some idea of the book's essential division. Hutton, you see, is a gradualist: we've had global change before, right since the days of the printing press; all that's happening is that the rate is speeding up. Giddens, on the other hand, is a "Gee Whizz" merchant, who clearly believes that any techno-prophecy will come true, and probably start to do so tomorrow. As you might imagine there are numerous references to the Third Way, now reinvented as "the Global Third Way".

Nothing else in the collection quite sustains this level of amusement, alas, although a contribution by the German sociology professor Ulrich Beck on "Living Your Own Life in a Runaway World" may be thought to run it close (sample: "despite, or because of, the institutional guidelines and the often incalculable insecurity, your own life is condemned to activity." It is? *Gosh.*)

Elsewhere, corporate bankers the world over will no doubt scratch their heads over the assertion made by George Soros – that's right, *George Soros* – that "the global financial crisis is now safely over". It is? With Wall Street about 30 percent overvalued and dot.com investment now falling down the pan? Oh well, you're the financial guru, George baby – it could be plausibly argued that much of the turbulence of the past three years is actually your fault – so doubtless you'll know.

But *On The Edge*'s real failure as a snapshot of "where we're at and what we can do about it" declares itself in a brisk little piece by Polly Toynbee called "Who's Afraid of Global Culture?" Apart from sinister Mr Murdoch, Ms Toynbee thinks that global culture is pretty much a good thing.

What colours her essay, though, and the contributions of most of her fellow-pundits, is the assumption that "global" (ie American) capitalism is a kind of monolithic juggernaut effortlessly sweeping local decencies from its path. But all across Europe – from Euro-Disney to the discreet (and practically invisible) McDonalds in Hampstead High Street – comes evidence of the compromises the mega-corporates are having to make to cut a dash on alien turf.

Nobody, too, seems to have a thought for one fundamental cause of international tension circa 2000, which is that as the world gets smaller (Seven-Up dispensers in the Sri Lankan jungle, etc) it's also, at any rate politically, growing larger as well. Think of all those ancient fragments of *mitteleuropa*, formerly snagged up in the Holy Roman Empire, who want burger bars *and* their own postage stamps.

Simultaneously, Hutton and Giddens' little effort also fails to conceal the single overriding weakness common to all future shock excursions: *nobody really has a clue.* Yes, it's a jungle out there, boys and girls, and not even an ex-editor of the *Observer* can see us through.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ SO, Steve Boal, Foyles' long-serving and long-suffering manager, and his assistant Mark Latus have been suspended following an investigation which revealed "financial irregularities" dating back 17 years. Presumably it took the accountants that long to find the ledgers.

In addition the company is using the good offices of Mishcon de Reya to pursue "a number of defendants" – including septuagenarian former manager Velimir Stimac, who presumably originated this fine old Charing Cross Road tradition – through the high court.

Before anyone judges, the alleged culprits too harshly, however, it must not be forgotten that old Christina Foyle was herself no stranger to sharp practices. At the time of her death last year, around 75 percent of staff were still "temporary", a state she maintained vigorously by sacking people the day before they had attained the six months' service required to qualify for full employee rights – a policy thankfully since abandoned by Boal and the new chairman, her nephew Christopher.

In addition there was a protracted strike among her booksellers in 1965, as they held out for the minimum wage. Having been treated shabbily for so long, it is perhaps no surprise that a few should want to give old Christina a taste of her own medicine?

■ AS predicted in *Eye* 968, Picador has let Roger Lewis and his biography of Anthony Burgess go, the book having now been picked up by Faber.

During the researches, Lewis had gone from being a fan of Burgess to disliking his subject intensely, a conversion similar to the one he experienced during the writing of his now sadly out-of-print *Life and Death of Peter Sellers*. Lewis planned to "crucify" Burgess as a result, something which dismayed Picador publisher Peter "Eeyore" Straus, who had been hoping for a frank, but balanced portrait.

The final destination of the book comes as little surprise. Faber's editorial director Jon Riley was Eeyore's predecessor at Picador and was, indeed, the man who commissioned Lewis in the first place.

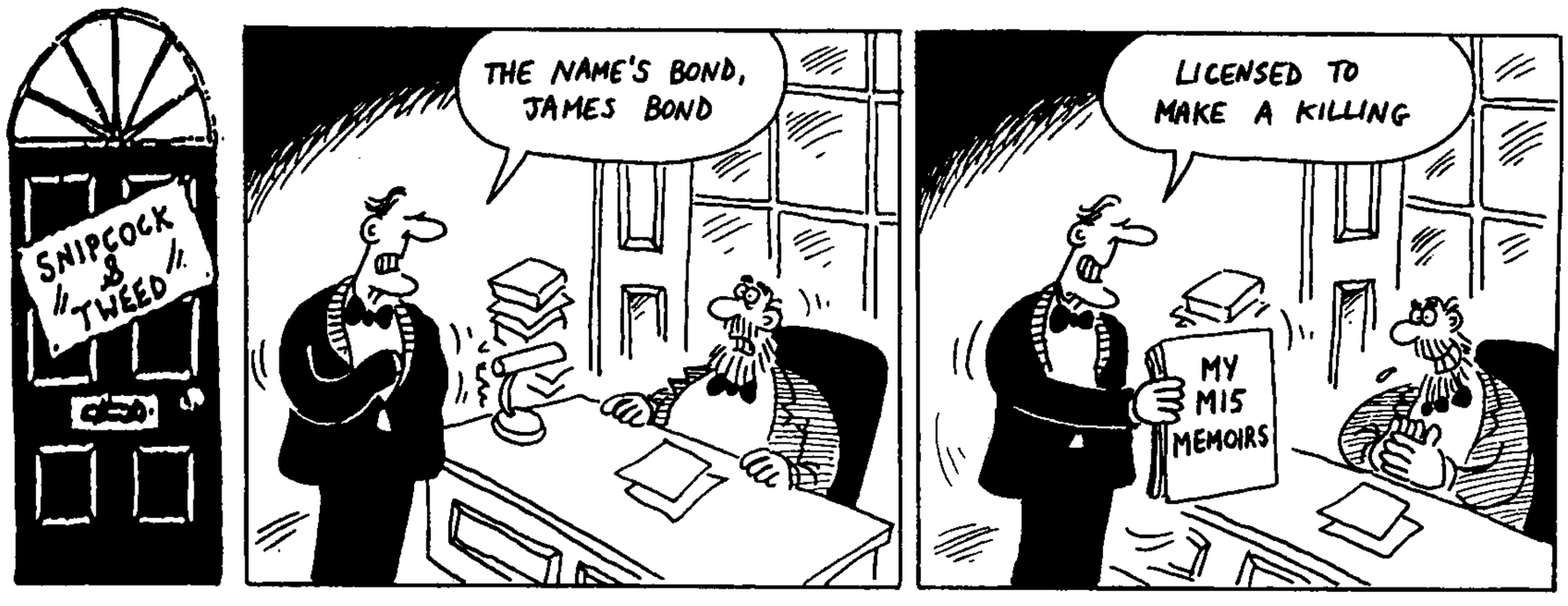
"...you coming in to play?"

■ THE Comment section of the *Independent on Sunday* on 7 May carried a curious essay by Salman Rushdie, taking a supposedly topical look at JM Coetzee's Booker-winning *Disgrace* [plot: White professor goes to stay with daughter on her smallholding after a sexual harrassment case. The pair are set upon by a group of black men...]

After seizing on the characters' names for a spot of sub-GCSE textual analysis ("Like the Byronic Lucifer – in whose name both 'Lurie' and 'Lucy' can be found..."), Rushdie declares that the book is only "coherent in its privileging of incoherence" and concludes that "It doesn't, finally, shed enough new light on the news".

Why this belated review should appear now is unclear. Surely it can have nothing to do with Coetzee's victory over Rushdie in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize last month, nor the South African's double-Booker success – Rushdie's *Shame* having been pipped at the post by *The Life and Times of Michael K* in 1983 and the unreadable *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* having failed even to make last year's shortlist?

'Bookworm'



IN THE BACK

BURDON OF PROOF

NOTHING, it seems, can stop the mayhem caused by buses which suddenly spurt ahead out of control.

In Chesterfield on 14 April passengers waiting for buses outside the Crooked Spire churchyard were horrified when a single-decker Stagecoach bus charged into them. Several people were taken to hospital, including Lisa Harding, 19, a Stagecoach worker who was checking that the buses were running on time. She was taken to Chesterfield Royal infirmary with a suspected broken leg.

The accident followed a string of similar accidents to Dennis Dart buses in recent years: for example at High Wycombe, Sunderland and Birmingham. Fearful that this was another in the same line, the *Eye* checked with Stagecoach at Chesterfield and was told that the bus was a Mercedes.

Three weeks later – on 8 May – the *Eye* received a long anonymous letter from Bristol. It enclosed front pages of the Bristol *Evening Post* of 4 and 6 May, which carried a story of another tragedy in a bus garage. A Volvo X39 bus, owned by the First Bus group, the biggest in the country, had mounted a stone kerb in Bristol's Marlborough bus station last year and crashed into an inspector's office.

A-level student Shemin Bandali, 17, was crushed in the accident and died in hospital soon afterwards. A year later, on 5 May this year, the driver of the bus, Michael Burdon, was up in front of Bristol magistrates charged with driving without due care and attention.

The *Post* reported as fact the prosecution's claim that Mr Burdon had slammed his foot on the accelerator instead of the brake — a claim often favoured by bus companies in such cases. Mr Burdon was convicted and fined £600. Great prominence was given in the *Post* to the anguish of the dead girl's parents ("£600 for our girl's life"), but much less space could be found for the story of driver Burdon, who denied that he had stepped mistakenly on the accelerator.

He said he was coasting into the bay area at the bus station when the engine suddenly started to scream. "I just froze and before I knew where I was I was in the inspector's office," he said. Another driver, Paul Rice, told magistrates he had had an exactly similar accident in the same bus three months previously. His bus, he said, had suddenly "flown forward for no reason". None of this impressed the magistrates who convicted Mr Burdo n, and announced boldly that the evidence had proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the accident could only have been attributed to human error.

The anonymous letter accompanying these reports came from a senior manager in the bus industry. "I have," the letter declared, "first hand knowledge of numerous 'surge' problems with not only Volvo marque vehicles but also those of the Dennis make, particularly the Lance and Dart derivatives.

"The problem is contained in the fuel injection system over-ride and flow controls which are prone to create rapid 'surge' problems which normal braking more often than not is unable to contain. Indeed, we have had instances of Dennis Lance vehicles skidding/surging 75 yards and only being stopped by an obstruction. Our drivers do report similar faults via the agreed procedure on a regular and monotonous basis but (strangely) we are advised to take no action. Drivers who persist in complaining are cautioned in a rather indirect and laborious manner and we have the support of ALL the trade unions."

The letter went on to complain that as in recent railway accidents the driver in the Bristol accident has been put up to shoulder all the blame, and asks the *Eye* to send driver Burdon all our previous articles about such surges (we have done so). The *Eye* warmly thanks this correspondent for this letter, and begs him/her to contact us with more information. Confidence will be most strictly maintained.

By pure chance the *Eye* has received another letter, dated 24 April, from Tom Crabtree of East Yorks, as follows: "Re the Dennis Dart surges, has anyone thought about fuel quality? The fuel injection pump is very complex and made to very fine tolerances. It is lubricated by the fuel passing through it. It incorporates a governor and a fuel regulating valve. These return the engine to idling speed when the accelerator is released. If for any reason either of these components is sticking, the engine will be uncontrollable. The lubricating quality of diesel fuel depends largely on its sulphur content. Modern fuels are thin and contain very little sulphur. There have been cases of fuel pumps on buses running on city diesel seizing up altogether because of inadequate lubrication. It could be worth carrying out a survey to relate cases of surging to the brand of fuel being used."

Howard's end

Glenn Howard

AN INQUEST jury was so shocked by the death of Glenn Howard, a 45-year-old mentally ill man who died following an encounter with seven police officers, that it defied a coroner's instructions not to comment on the case.

Instead the Croydon jurors blamed Metropolitan officers for using "excessive restraint followed by an immediate and subsequent neglect of medical care and attention", which resulted in a fatal brain injury.

As they left the hearing, three jurors shouted to Mr Howard's family that they had wanted to return a verdict of "unlawful killing". But coroner John Sampson had apparently denied them that option and instructed that they could return only an "open" or "accidental death" finding.

For two and half years Howard family members have been struggling to find out exactly what happened after police arrived at Mr Howard's flat. But they have been frustrated by what they see as a complete lack of police accountability.

The case raises serious issues about police treatment of the mentally ill; the use of controversial restraint techniques (there have been eight restraint-related deaths involving the Met in almost as many years); and the recurring problem of the police inability to investigate themselves – some witnesses were not questioned until 14 months after the death.

Right up until the inquest, and contrary to new home office guidelines, the family was kept in ignorance. Denied police reports the family only knew that the crown prosecution service (CPS) had decided there was insufficient evidence to prosecute any of the officers – and so far there has been no disciplinary action.

Mr Howard was a musician who had been a diagnosed schizophrenic for more than 27 years. He sometimes required hospital treatment. At other times he lived happily in sheltered accommodation in the community. The inquest heard his behaviour was sometimes eccentric or bizarre, but he had never been in any trouble and had no history of violence.

On 8 December 1997, his condition having deteriorated after he failed to take his medication, he was sent back to Sutton hospital under a mental health act order. Two days later he went AWOL. It was not the first time. He used to slip home to feed his tropical fish and then return to the hospital. Sure enough, officers from Sutton police station who were sent to return him to hospital found him at home.

According to the police, he was initially compliant. But he then tried to give them the slip and a struggle ensued in which he shoved an officer, who fell against a wall. Officers admitted they brought him to the ground, holding him in a backwards "bear-hug" for up to four minutes; that he was hit with a baton; and that he was placed face down with his legs crossed behind his back. Eleven officers were at the scene, seven involved in various stages of restraint.

He was noticed to have vomited, but was placed on his side only briefly. He was carried face down to the police van and taken to Sutton police station. Only then did someone see that his head was lolling back and his mouth was open. He was taken to hospital, but it seems it was already too late. A nurse recorded that he had turned blue and cold. Despite cardiac massage, he never regained consciousness. He remained on a ventilator in a persistent vegetative state until his death on 1 January 1999.

Although the inquest did not establish the exact timing of events from the arrival of police to Mr Howard's collapse, experts agreed he had not been breathing for up to 10 minutes and his brain had been starved of oxygen for up to four minutes.

Inquests with their narrow remit are not the ideal forum for exploring the wider issues involved in deaths in custody – and they are stacked against victims' families. There is no automatic right to legal aid (though in this case an exceptional payment was made by the lord chancellor's office), while police and authorities are always represented by barristers paid for by the state.

Coroners decide what witnesses to call. In Mr Howard's case the family had to fight to hear from certain key police officers. And coroners decide – usually – what verdicts and riders are available to the jury. Because of the danger of self incrimination, the coroner prevented the family from testing the police accounts. Investigation reports remain secret.

Mr Howard's death has been taken up by Amnesty International and could be one of the first tests under Article 2, which covers the right to life and the right to a proper investigation into death in custody, when the human rights act comes into force in October. The jury's condemnation of the police action has at least enabled the family lawyers to ask the CPS and the police complaints authority (PCA) to reconsider their decisions not to prosecute or discipline any officers.

Foot in mouth disease

YVETTE COOPER, junior health minister, has devised a new answer to deal with the persistent questions from Norman Baker, Lib Dem MP for Lewes, about the possible danger from vaccines manufactured with bovine material (In the Back *passim*). The new answer is "don't know".

On 23 May Mr Baker asked "in what year the first vaccine was used on humans which may have utilised bovine material from BSE-infected cows in the early stages of manufacture".

Ms Cooper replied: "This information is not available because the precise state of the emergence of BSE in cattle is not known and it is also not known if bovine material for use in the manufacture of vaccines was take from BSE-infected cattle."

Ms Cooper has already admitted that thousands if not hundreds of thousands of people, usually children, were vaccinated with vaccines made from bovine material after it became known that British cattle were infected with BSE, so perhaps she ought to know (or find out) when the danger of infection from such vaccines arose and how serious it was.

DONNA KEBABBED... AGAIN

SEASONED *Eye* readers might recall the extraordinary case of Donna Cannon, who was convicted early in 1994 of blackmail.

Her "victim", whom she was alleged to have blackmailed by threatening to report him for rape, was a police informer who had assisted police in convicting three Mafia drugs smugglers linked to the IRA.

The fact that her victim was a police informer was not disclosed at Donna Cannon's trial. She was acquitted of perverting the course of justice, but was convicted of blackmail and sentenced to 150 hours' community service. In another trial, she was accused – and acquitted – of stealing from a former colleague, Joanna West. Joanna West was also later exposed as a police informer, though that information too was not disclosed to the court. (*Eyes* 836 and 842).

All this was reported in the *Eye* six and half years ago. Donna Cannon's history since has been exemplary. She got a job for Surrey health authority working with patients suffering from drugs and alcohol abuse, and worked happily and successfully there for four years, during which, at the health authority's expense, she qualified as a legal executive.

Late last year PC Micky Pearse of Surrey police rang her employer, Surrey social services, with the completely false information that Donna Cannon was a heroin addict. She was instantly sacked. She protested vigorously to the police complaints authority (PCA).

In a judgment conveyed to her last May, the PCA upheld her complaint and accepted that her

Donna Cannon

allegation against the constable was proved beyond reasonable doubt. In a letter to Donna, Ms L.M. White, a member of the PCA, wrote: "The Assistant Chief Constable of Surrey has written to the PCA suggesting that Constable Pearse should be advised by his area commander in respect of disclosure of information. He also pointed out that your complaint had highlighted weaknesses in the procedure for liaison with other agencies. Arrangements are therefore being made for the introduction of formal guidelines. After careful consideration I am satisfied that this is a suitable way of dealing with the shortcomings highlighted by your complaint. The Assistant Chief Constable has asked me to pass on his apologies for any distress that the disclosure of information has caused."

No mention was made by the PCA or by Surrey police of any compensation for this gross and false intrusion into Donna Cannon's life that resulted in her losing her livelihood. Several months later, Donna got another job – working for the Hampton Trust, a charity in Southampton, on a new scheme to provide bail for young offenders.

By all accounts the scheme was an outstanding success. In April, four months after she started work, Donna was suddenly sacked. The trust told her that she should have disclosed her complaint about the police last year. The fact that her complaint was upheld, was, she was told, irrelevant. She had failed to disclose "a critical matter which, in the trustees' judgement, could affect your ability to carry out your professional and managerial tasks". Her continued employment at the Trust was impossible particularly since the chief constable of Hampshire was one of the trustees. On appeal last month, her summary dismissal was upheld.

The *Eye* asked Ros Cassey, director of the Hampton Trust, a) whether any of the work for the trust by Donna Cannon was unsatisfactory, and if so what; b) whether her dismissal had anything to do with her previous complaint to the PCA; and c) whether it was in any way the case that the trust felt it improper to employ Donna Cannon because she had complained to the police when the chief constable of Hampshire was one of the trust's trustees.

The "answer", which needs as usual to be compared carefully with the questions, was as follows: "Donna was employed as Bail Supervision and Support team leader by the Hampton Trust from 10th January 2000. Her contract was terminated during the probationary period by the Trust on 7th April. Donna appealed against her dismissal but the original decision was upheld by an appeal panel consisting of three members of the board of trustees. I am unable to provide any further information."

BOOBIES ON THE BEAT

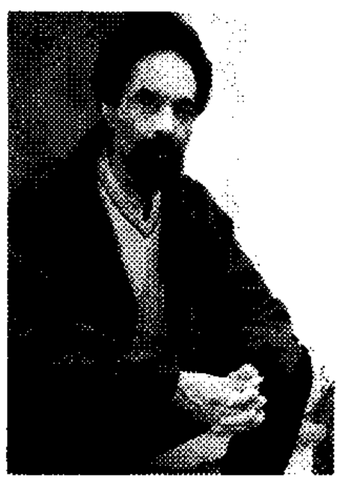
IF ANYONE doubted the warnings from Police Federation officials about the low morale in the force, they had only to read the *Evening Standard*'s rip-roaring account of what it called "the biggest armed operation in British police history".

For five months, the report revealed, Scotland Yard had been planning the raid, in January last year, on "Britain's biggest drug den" – the Backbeat club in London's Charing Cross Road. Detectives "set up a surveillance unit in a building across the road", and undercover officers infiltrated the club's membership.

"In the basement packaged bags of drugs were carefully weighed before being sent upstairs to be sold," said the report. It went on: "The clientele came from all over Europe" – and not surprisingly, for "according to one estimate 50 kilograms of cannabis were being sold every week". The place was run by a sinister couple, backed by at least 40 potentially violent "Yardies", known to the dealers as "loyal soldiers".

All this crime obviously demanded the full resources of the Metropolitan police. The Yard's specialist firearms squad was specially briefed. Armed units "slipped into the building" while "snipers took up their positions on the roofs of surrounding business premises". Two huge articulated lorries were deliberately stalled outside as 120 police officers stormed the building. Grenades were thrown from the lorries into the parts of the building occupied by the Yardies. This was the signal for the rest of the force – 350-strong – to attack.

This vast and noisy offensive lasted for all of three minutes. The total number of people arrested was, er, two. Scotland Yard confirmed to the *Eye* that Mary Ann Quinn and her boyfriend Floyd Alexander were the only people held. (Alexander was arrested later in the day at his home.) The couple were found guilty of conspiring to supply cannabis and were sent to prison for five years.



Kamara 2

MARK FISHER, Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent Central, has written to the lord chancellor about the 19-year imprisonment of John Kamara (left) for a murder he did not commit (see last *Eye*).

He says he raised the case with several home office ministers (including David Maclean) but never got a satisfactory reply. Mr Fisher wants to know why 201 statements which establish Kamara's innocence were not disclosed at the time – or ever since until a few weeks ago.

Lord Justice Otton at the court of appeal, he points out, "absolved the trial judge, leading counsel and the jury from blame. So where does the blame lie?" He asks for an investigation into this miscarriage of justice "and particularly into the actions of the DPP". The *Eye* will be following the official reaction closely.

High Principals

Bolton squanderers

WHEN Terry "Wogan" Hogan, principal of Bolton College, Lancashire, applied for ill health retirement at the end of last year, he was so sorely missed by his colleagues that two of them followed suit.

In April the director of finance John Rowbottom left to take up a similar position at another institution, while the same month saw the involuntary departure of the managing director of a college spin-off, Bolton College Consultancy Services (BCCS), Glyn Pennington.

The departure of the three men was entirely unrelated to the fact that the college currently owes the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) £3m after over-claiming for student numbers since 1995. Nor was it connected to the recent decision by governors to wind up BCCS after it recorded losses of around £100,000 in the last financial year, with the result that 22 projects funded by the European social fund will now be shelved.

Not so long ago BCCS was trumpeted as a success, supposedly bringing in an annual income of £1.5m by cashing in on the training boom for small firms. After Hogan's departure, however, acting principal Dr David Collins, a trouble-shooter brought in from the beacon South Cheshire College to resolve the financial crisis over student numbers, also began investigating BCCS.

Following his dismissal in April for gross misconduct, Pennington was interviewed by the police in connection with the use of a BCCS company credit card, and a police probe into the company continues.

The FEFC has just published a damning report on the college, blaming the governors for failing to control the college affairs. The governors are now considering whether to step down.

Hasn't he Dunwell?

MORE top brass vanishes at East Yorkshire College, Bridlington. Malcolm Dunwell, director of human resources, has terminated his contract with the college. Apparently he was asked to resign or be sacked, rather like his former principal David Brewer, who has just taken "garden leave".

Further Education Funding Council bureaucrats may be tempted to move in with another round of compulsory redundancies. But they should remember what happened when Mr Dunwell tried the same solution. In 1998 three sacked East Yorks lecturers took the college to a tribunal alleging unfair dismissal. The tribunal concluded: "Mr Dunwell, a personnel professional of long experience, visibly struggled at times to justify a (redundancy) procedure which we have found to be a charade and a sham."

● **THE newly-merged Woolwich and Greenwich Community College has demonstrated its firm commitment to European working time regulations by threatening mass redundancies.**

The 597 part-time teachers who comprise 85 percent of the college lecturers have been told that from next year the college proposes to use a "third party provider". The college has been in talks with the celebrated agency Education Learning Services (ELS). The working time directive entitles all lecturers to four weeks' paid annual leave from September, but this only applies to those on continuous contracts of 13 weeks or more, leaving the way clear for commercial agencies to employ staff for 12 weeks at a time.

The lecturers' union NATFHE recently won three industrial tribunal cases against the college over holiday pay for part-timers. On its web-site, ELS makes it clear that this could never happen if it were in charge of supplying lecturers. The move by Woolwich and Greenwich makes it clear the college is not going to pay an extra three weeks' wages to a further 594 part-timers without a fight.

In the City

AS WHEN Andrew Regan mounted his ill-fated takeover bid for the Co-Operative Wholesale Society, he is adopting a high risk, high profile strategy in defending himself against the £2.4m theft charge he has returned to face.

An astute leak by the Regan spin machine to friendly *Sunday Business* prepared the ground for his sudden "voluntary" return from self-imposed exile in Monaco last week. After months of negotiation and preparation, it is suspected that Regan knew the Serious Farce Office was about to start extradition proceedings with the prospect of success.

Post his £1m bail, further guidance to the *Financial Times* and the *Sunset Times* revealed the outline of the Regan defence: nothing to do with me and those who say it is are not beyond criticism. The first may come as a surprise because a Co-Op supply contract with Regan's company Hobson is at the heart of the case. The second will not.

All based on the premise that the best form of defence is attack. Those going forward set the agenda. And it is difficult if not impossible for the SFO, far from the most agile of players, to respond without risking outraged cries of preventing Regan obtaining a fair trial! As Regan clearly wants to have his say – not directly of course, so far – in the press before he has it in court, there may well be more to come.

More on those in the City whom Regan claims to be guilty. A recurrent Samson theme played by Regan and others in his situation.

More on key SFO witnesses Ronald Zimet and Robert Bonnier. The Regan camp has let it be known that it has compiled dossiers on both men which it has provided to the SFO. Regan and Zimet were clients of Swiss Bank Corporation's corporate finance department, where Bonnier worked, at the time of the 1995 Co-Op deal. Zimet has been given effective immunity from prosecution – if he returns from Israel to testify. Zimet and Scoot.com boss Bonnier have done deals together.

More perhaps on Regan's decision to "voluntarily" return to face the theft charge. Less, however, on whether this was a jump ahead of the push provided by the SFO finally getting its extradition act together. The Regan camp had decided not to fight extradition. Not just because it is very expensive and there is no legal aid, but because if the SFO won then there could be no bail pending trial. Anyone who waives extradition always gets bail.

The questions for the SFO now are when will Regan go to trial; will he be tried later this year with the three other defendants (two former senior Co-Op executives) accused of corruption over the Hobson deal; is it possible that the theft charge (tailored to meet the Monaco extradition agreement) may now be replaced with a corruption charge as there was no extradition; and will the trial or trials be moved from London's least accessible and reported crown court at Snaresbrook?

MOHAMED FAYED's dreams of football glory are involving him in spending on a truly pharaonic scale. His bid to boost pedestrian Fulham into a share of the premiership's billions has so far cost him at least £32m with no end or return in sight!

The latest accounts for Fulham, covering the 1998-99 season, reveal that Fayed by last June had pumped that amount into the club since 1997 through interest-free loans from his company Fulham Leisure Holdings in the British Virgin Islands tax haven. Just where the BVI company obtained £32m to lend interest free is a question for Fayed's bankers.

That figure will have only grown as a result of Fulham's recent failure to win promotion from division one. Especially as new French manager Jean Tigana has reputedly cost several millions and is likely to want to buy more players. By winning promotion from division two in 1998-99 Fulham almost doubled turnover to £6.4m. But its losses only rose from £6.2m to £8.8m. Not surprisingly as the club owes more than £25m and has net liabilities of £17m, the Fulham accounts are prepared on a "going concern" basis relying on Fayed's promised continued support. Fulham Leisure Holdings (BVI) has given "indications" that it will continue to keep the cheque book open "for the foreseeable future" although there is "no legal obligation".

Meanwhile the accounts of the club's immediate UK parent company Fulham Football Leisure (another subsidiary is to develop the potentially highly valuable Craven Cottage ground leased from a Fayed Jersey company for £1m a year) show even bigger losses. These have now reached £18m since Fayed bought the club in 1997.

Plans for a 30,000 seat stadium may boost the value of the phoney pharaoh's investment and present his best escape route if Fulham fail to realise his premiership dreams. But until then the Fulham losses will keep draining millions from the legendary Fayed fortune.

LIFE is suddenly becoming harder for the SFO's longest running fugitive Asil Nadir. Not only is the former Polly Peck boss no longer persona grata in Turkey, after a dispute with investors over $2m, but his influence in his Northern Cyprus refuge is waning. Proof of this came with the decision last month of the Turkish Cypriot authorities to take over his ailing Industrial Bank of Cyprus. This followed pressure from depositors after a wave of bank closures.

Nadir had initially survived by borrowing $5.5m from the central bank. This was supposed to go to repay depositors. Instead Nadir is suspected of siphoning off most of the money himself. When this was discovered the Turkish authorities – which bankroll the Northern Cyprus enclave – are said to have insisted that the government, which is the bank's biggest creditor having made earlier loans of more than $4m, take over.

With a new Turkish president in power, Nadir's old friend and protector Rauf Denktash may not be able to save him from retribution even if he can still save him from extradition to Britain.

EVERYONE agrees juries are a good thing, well most defendants anyway. They see things that judges overlook, particularly about witnesses. Sadly in complex financial cases, they often fail, understandably, to follow paper trails of evidence as easily as judges. But as, unlike in the United States, we are not allowed to know why juries decide anything, we are unable to understand why they and judges sometimes disagree with illogical results.

Former Citibank banker Christopher Roberts has had time to contemplate the vagaries of jury decisions after he was convicted of VAT fraud last month by a jury which acquitted his partner, boxing promoter Frank Warren. Roberts was to be sentenced on 1 June.

Stock Horror

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Roberts no doubt now understands how Brent Walker finance director Wilfred Aquilina felt when he was convicted of fraud and his boss, former boxer George Walker, was acquitted. However, Roberts can have no complaints. After all, the former banker was the VAT expert, signed the incorrect returns and maintained Warren was useless with accounts. No wonder the jury acquitted Warren.

Nor can Roberts criticise juries because almost 10 years ago he was acquitted of criminal charges on which in a later civil case a whole raft of judges effectively found him guilty. The criminal and civil cases arose out of a £23m share deal orchestrated by Roberts days before he was encouraged to quit as Citibank's head of private banking. Roberts persuaded Smith New Court (SNC) in July 1989 to buy a large block of Ferranti shares shortly before it emerged that the company was the victim of a major fraud by American conman James Guerin. The shares were security from a Guerin company which was into Citibank big time. When the fraud emerged two months later, Ferranti shares collapsed.

Roberts was charged by the SFO with offences under the financial services act for deliberately misleading SNC. He was acquitted in 1991.

But a year later on the same evidence Mr Justice Chadwick (who knew a thing or two about fraud having successfully prosecuted the first Guinness case) found Roberts guilty on two occasions of making a "fraudulent statement" with the "intent" to induce SNC to buy the Ferranti shares from Citibank. Chadwick ruled that Roberts had misled SNC in two out of three conversations by suggesting that there were rival firm bidders for the shares when he knew there was none. SNC was awarded damages against a Citibank subsidiary Scrimgeour Vickers (Asset Management).

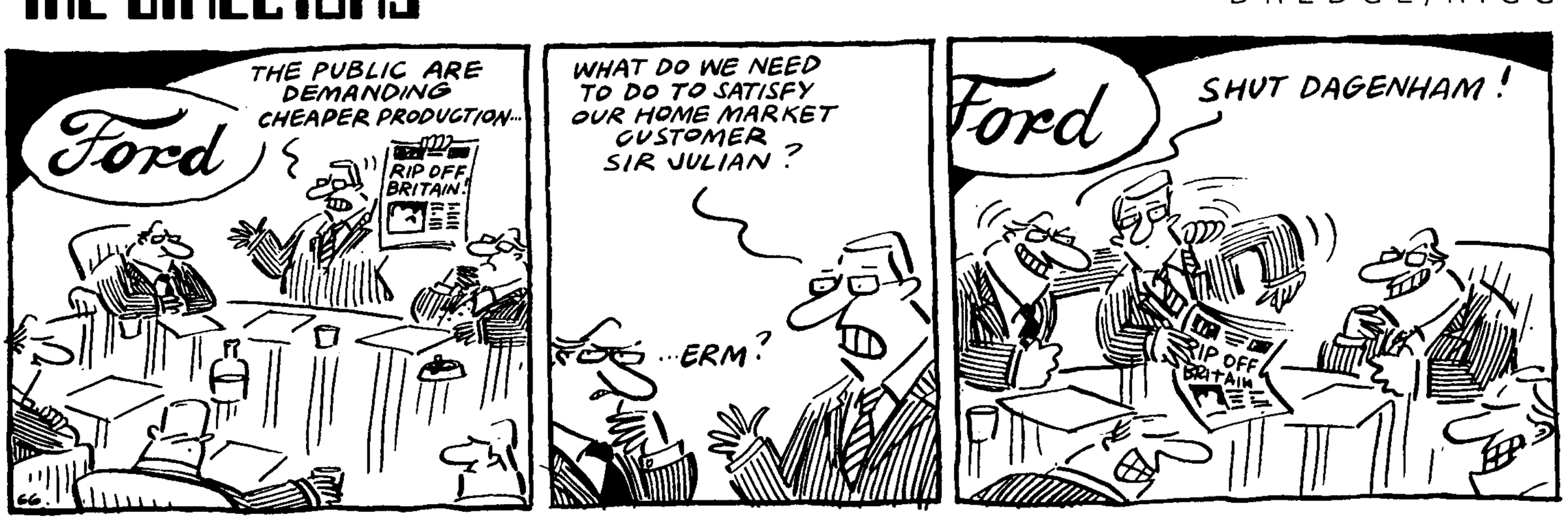
SVAM appealed and in 1994 three court of appeal judges ruled that "all the incidents of fraud had been made out" and Roberts had mislead SNC on all three occasions. SVAM appealed to the House of Lords. In 1996 the five law lords upheld Chadwick's decision that Roberts had made "actionable fraudulent misrepresentations on the second and third occasions he discussed the Ferranti share sale with SNC... Deceit had been established."

So Citibank ended up paying over £11m plus millions in legal costs while Roberts went off to do the VAT returns at Sports Network for Warren celebrating the benefit of having the verdict of 12 jurors rather than 9 judges. Until now.

'Slicker'

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE/RIGG



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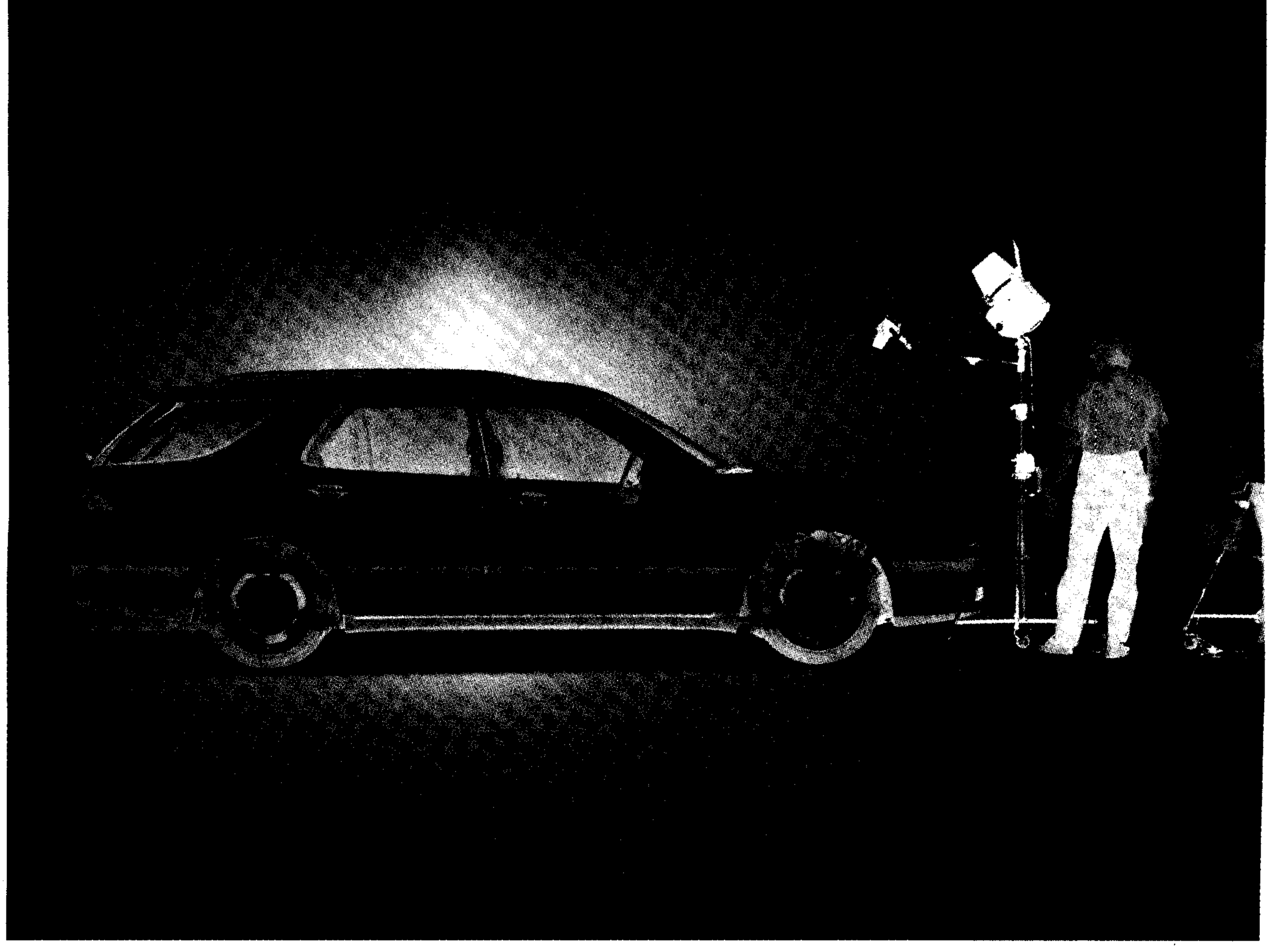

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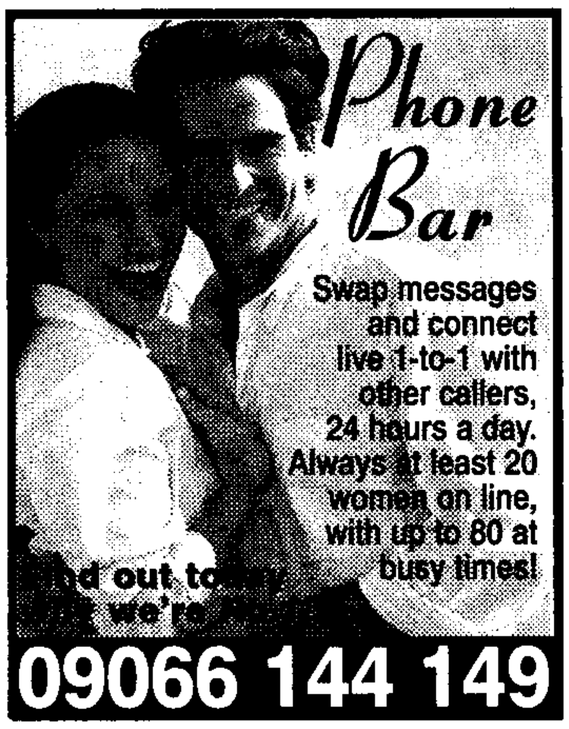
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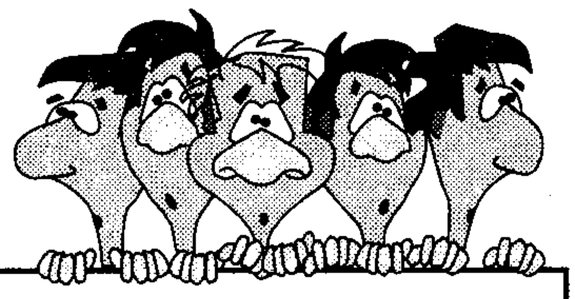

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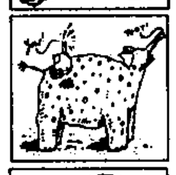
Cartoon Gallery

A selection of cartoons, illustrations and animated cels can be found on the Cartoon Gallery Website, from Chris Riddell to Steve Bell, Alex to Appleby, Honeysett to Husband and McLachlan to Matt.


The site also has extensive biographies, including Ronald Searle and Kipper Williams and the merchandise pages offer a selection of books by top cartoonists from Britain and abroad.

All cartoons and books are dispatched within three working days via our mail order department, so for the speculative and gift buyer alike, please visit:
www.cartoongallery.co.uk

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TITANIA (40), short – seeks tall mature masterful Oberon in pin stripes – view to long term wild thyme search. Photo appreciated. Box 1003.

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FIT, PRESENTABLE, assertive, solvent male, 50's, seeks unassertive but wayward lady living within 30 miles radius of Marble Arch. Absolute discretion assured – so be adventurous. Box 2001.

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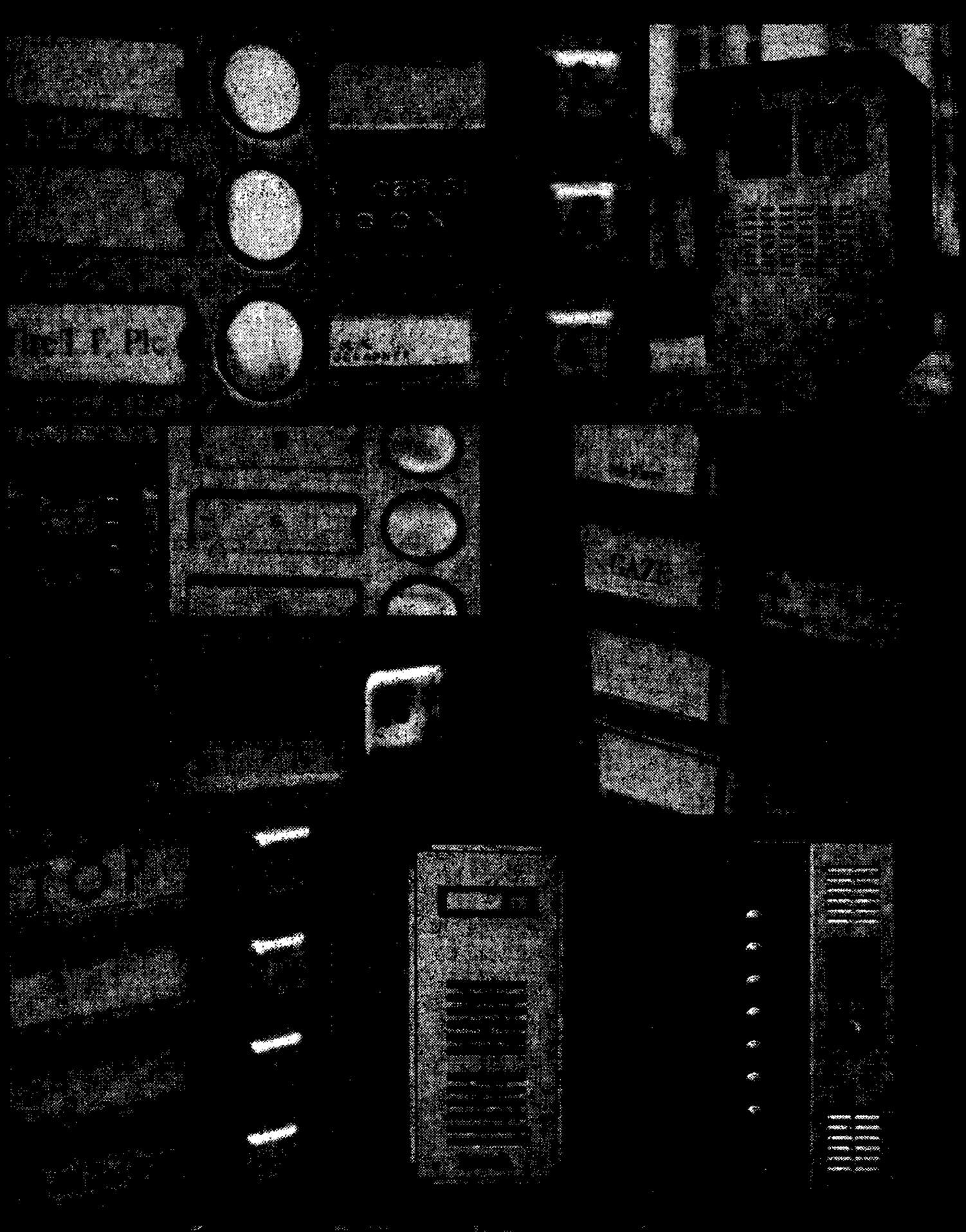

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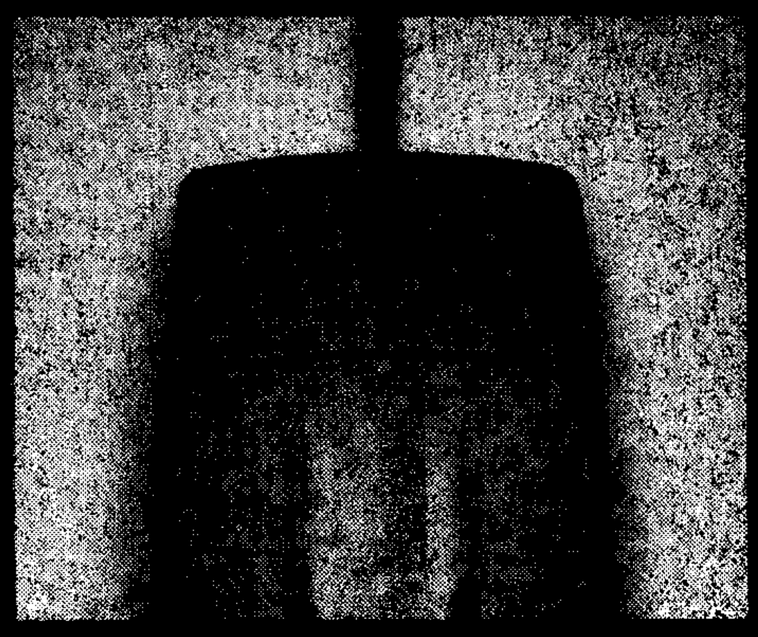

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